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# MACCARTHY MORE;

OR THE  
FORTUNES OF AN IRISH CHIEF  
IN THE  
REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

BY MRS. J. SADLIER,

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"WILLIE BURKE;" "NEW LIGHTS;" "THE CONFEDERATE CHIEF-  
TAINS;" "ELINOR PRESTON;" "BESSIE CONWAY;" "THE CON-  
FESSIONS OF AN APOSTATE;" "CON O'REGAN;" "OLD  
AND NEW;" "THE HERMIT OF THE ROCK;" "THE  
OLD HOUSE BY THE BOYNE;" "AUNT  
HONOR'S KEEPSAKE;" &c., &c.

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## PREFACE.

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IN presenting this historical sketch to the reader, the author has a full consciousness of the objections that may be raised against it. No work less artistic was ever offered to a criticising public. It is neither story, nor biography, neither all truth, nor all fiction, but a mixture of all. It will be seen that the commencement has more of the character of an ordinary tale, and that is because the earlier life of Florence MacCarthy and his wife presents more of the romantic element than the long, weary years of care and turmoil and ceaseless disquietude that came after.

The subject may seem badly chosen for a tale, but such as it is, I would not willingly have changed it for another, were it even of a more dramatic character. This was chosen with due deliberation, for the purpose of bringing before the new generation the half-forgotten name and fame of one of the most remarkable

Irishmen of the troubled sixteenth century. A literary friend, over whom the grave has since closed, wrote to me at an early stage of this sketch—"I foresee that the absence of the moral element in the character of Florence MacCarthy will be your greatest difficulty"; and so I have found it. Nevertheless, taken with all his faults, Florence was a man of many gifts, more sinned against than sinning,—a man whose good and even noble qualities were all his own, whose bad qualities were engrafted on his nature by the continued injustice of which he was most of his long life the victim. Perhaps, in all history there is no other instance of such a career as his. Noble, even princely, by birth, the inheritor of vast estates, both from his father and father-in-law, Tanist or heir apparent to the territory and the dignity of MacCarthy Reagh, and, finally, elected by chiefs and people to the style and title of MacCarthy More, or head of his sept,—he was engaged in a constant struggle with the all-grasping powers that were, and the rapacious adventurers of that day in Ireland, for the possession of his own rightful inheritance. Little benefit did he derive from the vast possessions that were his only in name, and the great power that would have enabled him, if a free agent, to render effective aid to the national party with

whom all his sympathies were entertained, was so trammelled by the jealous policy of Elizabeth and her ministers that he was unable to turn it to account. That he carried on for many years extensive negotiations with Catholic princes abroad there can be no doubt, and that he stood high in the estimation of the King of Spain and other powerful friends of the persecuted Catholics of Ireland is equally certain. Perhaps his great error was excessive caution, and a too great fondness for temporizing. Had he lived in our day he would probably be called "a trimmer," and there is no doubt that he was entitled to the name of "The Munster Machiavelli," given him by our friend already referred to; yet, we think, the difficulties of his position were not sufficiently considered by O'Neil and Desmond and the other Catholic leaders of his own day,—and we, of modern times, have been, and are, too apt to take the characters of historic men and women as their enemies represent them. We are of opinion that, as time rolls on, and Irish history becomes more known, through the labors of Irish scholars, the character of Florence MacCarthy More will be seen in a more favorable light. Much has been done to justify his character by the admirable work of Daniel MacCarthy, so often quoted in this volume—"Life and Letters

of Florence MacCarthy More." We know of no work we would sooner recommend to the student of Irish history, not even Father Meehan's "Flight of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell." Taken together, they are two of the best works on Irish subjects that these latter years have produced. Hoping that the singular phase of Irish history here given to the public may induce some readers to penetrate farther into that comparatively unworked mine of ancient lore, I send it forth with all its imperfections on its head.

NEW YORK, *June*, 1868.



**MACCARTHY MORE;**  
**OR,**  
**THE FORTUNES OF AN IRISH CHIEF**  
**IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.**

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**CHAPTER I.**

IN the year 1588 the fair province of Munster presented, for the most part, one wide scene of desolation; the eight years' rebellion of Gerald, sixteenth Earl of Desmond, had been at length suppressed, at enormous cost to the Government, and the gory head of the aged earl was bleaching on a spike on London Bridge. With the exception of the very few chieftains of note who had stood by the Queen's Government during the rebellion, all the new and old English, as well as the native Irish lords, had seen their countries first ravaged with fire and sword, then handed over by royal grants and letters patent to the officers of the Queen's army. Over and above this wholesale transfer of entire districts to the great adventurers whose names are but too familiar to read-

ers of Irish history, the St. Legers, the Raleighs,\* the Herberts, the Courtneys, the Trenchers, the Berkeleys, and many others, a swarm of the smaller fry, the common soldiers, and others such, overran the country, taking each what he could grasp in the struggle, and then securing a right to the same by petition and claims for service rendered.

It was at once painful and curious to see the various shifts to which the original owners had recourse, in order to save even a remnant of their property from the claws of the cormorants who were seizing all under favor of "the Queen's Majesty." Even those chiefs, or lords of countries who had, from prudential motives, or a strange perversity of judgment, upheld the English cause against their kinsmen and countrymen, and consented to hold their territories from the Queen, found it harder than they might have expected to make head against the insidious policy of the great and small Undertakers from England, who had set their hearts on having and holding every foot of land that had an Irish Papist for its owner. Thus stood matters in the Southern province of Ireland at the opening of our story, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

Amongst those native Munster chieftains who had remained loyal to the Government throughout the Desmond rebellion, were the lords of Carbery and

\* Sir Walter Raleigh and his friends alone received no less than 86,000 acres of the confiscated lands of Desmond, comprising some of the richest and most fertile in Ireland.

Muskerry, two of the three great chiefs of the powerful sept of the MacCarthys. But the head of their house, the MacCarthy More, although created Earl of Clancarthy by Queen Elizabeth at the outbreak of the rebellion, had done little, or rather nothing, to serve the Government; being the brother-in-law of the Earl of Desmond (whose sister was his wife), he had never actually joined the English against him, and the Government, knowing the vast power he could have thrown into the scale in favor of Desmond, were fain to keep him in his neutral position, even at the risk of his giving secret aid to his relative and friend. Although Donald, Earl of Clancarthy, was not the man to be influenced by patriotism, or, indeed, any other high and lofty motive, being much addicted to low, sensual pleasures, and naturally of a mean and grovelling mind, still it is quite certain his sympathies were with the oppressed Catholics, and that he did afford some aid and comfort to the Earl of Desmond in his sore need. His vast territories, bordering on those of the Geraldines, had suffered severely during the long-protracted contest; Donald's neutrality could not, and did not, preserve them from sharing more or less in the utter desolation that had come on the adjoining country, the theatre of the great rebellion; what with fugitive parties of Desmond's men flying thither from the pursuit of their enemies, after sustaining a defeat, and the wanton outrages of their fierce English pursuers, Clancarthy's country was much impoverished,

and his people were indignant at the vacillating conduct of their chief, which left them thus exposed, so to say, between two fires.

Things could not go on in this way. There came a time when the Earl of Clancarthy found it necessary to justify himself to the government, and to disclaim by letter all connection with his unfortunate relative, then reduced to the last extremity. His letter of excuse and submission was graciously received; he was ostentatiously admitted to renewed favor, but his country was immediately placed under English protection, viz:—the gentle care of such men as Sir Warham St. Leger, and the military authorities generally. Still the land was nominally his own, his renewed submission of it and himself to the Queen having saved it from the claws of the vultures who were in those evil days ever hovering over the “countries,” of the great Irish lords.

Now, this first Earl of Clancarthy had, at this time, but one legitimate child remaining, a daughter who was still under twenty, and of such goodly presence as might be expected from the daughter of MacCarthy More, and the niece of the princely Geraldine. Trained by her lady mother in the womanly accomplishments befitting her rank, Lady Ellen MacCarthy had grown up to early womanhood in the seclusion of her father's chief castle of Pallice on the lovely banks of the Laune, in the romantic solitudes of Killarney, close by the Lower Lake.

A few short years before, and a bright-faced boy,

her young brother, had bounded over the Kerry hills by her side, in the beauty and freshness of early youth, giving promise of a noble manhood. Now he was gone, and she was alone, alone with her aged mother, and their attendants in that far lonely fortress by the sweet Laune side. The fate of that young son of Clancarthy, the Baron of Valentia, is so sadly illustrative of those strange and turbulent times that we will be pardoned for digressing from our main subject while we relate it.

It was the practice of the English government to demand hostages from the native chiefs whose loyalty was not sufficiently well assured. It so happened, therefore, that when first the Earl of Clancarthy became an object of suspicion to the Queen's officers, in her happy and prosperous kingdom of Ireland, his wife and son were demanded, and accordingly given by Donald as hostages for his good and dutiful behavior in regard to his gentle liege Elizabeth. The Countess was, after a while, restored to her home, but the son and heir of MacCarthy More was kept in durance vile. From England, whither he was first sent, the young Baron was brought to Dublin Castle. He had not been long in that gloomy abode, the shadow of whose massive towers falls darkly over the history of the Irish race, when, wonderful to relate, he escaped and made his way to France. How a mere boy, like Clancarthy's son, could have eluded the vigilance of his keepers, and, in defiance of bolts and bars, effected his escape

was a problem that puzzled every one except those who were in the secret, whoever *they* might be. The Earl stoutly denied all knowledge of the affair, and was, or affected to be, full as angry as any of the functionaries whose agreeable duty it was to communicate the strange tidings to their amiable sovereign beyond seas. All the information that could be gathered on the subject was that "one William Barry," no doubt a foster brother of the young Baron, or an attached follower of his house,—had "enticed and conveyed away the young Lord of Valentia, the Earl of Clancarty's son," out of her majesty's realm of Ireland. If the Earl was at all privy to his son's abduction, then must his powers of dissimulation have been greater than was generally supposed, for, even in presence of Elizabeth herself, he persistently denied all knowledge of how it had taken place, and declared himself much aggrieved by the spiriting away of his son.

Whether the Earl was sincere in his protestations, or that he was only acting a part, the drama, as regarded his son, was speedily brought to a close. The story is as touching as it is brief. A very short time after the mysterious escape of the boy-Baron, poor Barry was discovered in the Earl's country, in the disguise of a beggar, and being arrested, by the Earl's own order, and sent to Dublin, the faithful fellow confessed that he had ventured back to Ireland for the purpose of obtaining some means of subsistence for the young lord. Alas! for the deli-

cately-nurtured boy, in whose veins flowed the blood of two princely houses! Never again did he behold his humble friend, nor was any relief sent him to the strange land where his wayward fortune had cast him lone and helpless. Barry was kept in prison, and a few months after the news reached Ireland that "the young Baron of Valentia had died in France." So ended the brief record of his life. And so it was that Lady Ellen MacCarthy became heiress apparent of the vast possessions of her house, if not of her father's new title, to which neither he nor any of his people attached much importance. *MacCarthy More*, or, the *great MacCarthy* was his far prouder title, because it was that which his ancestors had borne for many ages, and it was also that by which he ruled his broad domains.

But alas for the poor Countess; as though the loss of her only son, her bright, bold boy, under such hard circumstances, were not sorrow enough for her already broken spirit, the news of his death made anything but a favorable change in the Earl. From that day forward he threw off all restraint, indulged his evil habits more than ever, and became utterly regardless of consequences. In order to raise money for his riotous course of living, he mortgaged large tracts of land, and with them some of his castles, to the great disgust of the friends of his house, and the grief of his immediate relatives.

Amongst those to whom the reckless chieftain had mortgaged some of his lands was a certain Sir

Valentine Brown, an Englishman by birth, a surveyor by profession, and an undertaker of confiscated Irish property, by favor of her high mightiness, Queen Elizabeth. Sir Valentine Brown was a sharp, shrewd man, and the Earl of Clancarthy was by all men considered a very shallow and heedless one; it was, therefore, prognosticated on all sides that the keen-witted surveyor, having once got a footing within the territory of MacCarthy More, by grants of the confiscated lands of some minor chiefs, "executed for treasonable acts," would undoubtedly carve a fortune for himself out of the expected ruin of Clancarthy. It would be now considered a trifling sum that Brown had advanced to the Earl,—being considerably under one thousand pounds,—yet for that paltry sum Brown had received actual possession of a fine property called Molahiff, worth £1,000 a year, the profits of which he was to enjoy until such time as the money advanced was paid back, which the Earl had reserved the right of doing. A great eyesore to the whole Clan Carthy was this thriving English settlement at Molahiff in the very heart of MacCarthy More's country. Valentine had built himself a strong English house with a spacious barn attached, and made many other improvements that went to show how little idea he had of the place being ever restored to the original owner.

The winter of 1587-8 was drawing to a close when the tidings spread abroad that the Earl of Clancarthy was about "to prefer his daughter in marriage,"—as

the quaint phraseology of the day expressed it. Here was news for the unmarried amongst the noblemen and gentlemen of Munster! The young and hand, some heiress of the princely MacCarthy More was to be given in marriage, to whom no one knew, as yet. The prize was so rich, so tempting, that many would fain have tried to win it, but it was only the noblest in the land who could aspire to the hand of the Lady Ellen MacCarthy.

All at once a strange rumor went about, startling alike friend and foe of MacCarthy More, and making the blood of every one who bore his name boil with indignation. The Earl had made choice of a son-in-law, and of all the men in Ireland who should he be but Nicholas Brown, the low-born son of the English surveyor! The young heiress who was to transmit to future ages the blood, if not the name of a long line of princely ancestors,—whose hand no English nobleman would have dared to solicit, fearing the Queen's displeasure,—for the Queen's pleasure was known to be, as her deputy Sir Henry Sydney had expressed it, "the *dissipation*," that is to say, the "breaking up" of the territories of the great Irish lords. The possessions of the Earl of Clancarthy were so vast that he would have been a bold man indeed, were he the first noble in the realm, who would venture to ask the hand of their future lady from the Queen of England. Sir Thomas Norreys, President of Munster, had entertained some thoughts of making such application, advised thereto by his friend, Sir

Warham St. Leger. But to think of Nicolas Browne carrying off the richest prize on Irish ground !

If the announcement of the Earl's singular choice so astonished the very English officials themselves what must have been the feelings of the whole Clancarthy, through Carbery, Muskerry, and Desmond ?\* A thrill of fiercest anger shot through every heart, and on every cheek was the flush of shame as the rumor, low and doubting at first, becoming louder and more confident as time went on, reached the ears of young and old, of high and low, that MacCarthy More "was selling his daughter, for money, to Valentine Browne's son." This capped the climax, and many a fierce clansman, grasping the handle of his skene, swore within himself the base English churl should never wed MacCarthy's daughter.

But all this time what effect had the news on Lady Ellen herself and her lady mother, in their lone dwelling by the lake shore ? Overwhelmed were they both by the strange tidings which the Earl himself had conveyed to them in his rough, despotic way, curtly and sternly,—then, as if to deprive them of the opportunity of endeavoring to shake his resolution, he set out at once for London,—for "the

\* Carbery was the country of MacCarthy Reagh ; Muskerry of another great chief of the MacCarthy's, and Desmond, called "Desmond Proper," was the MacCarthy More's own country, long contested between those powerful chieftains and the southern Geraldines, whose palatinate of Desmond embraced a still larger tract of country in Cork, Limerick, and Waterford. Desmond Proper was in Kerry.

Court," as the phrase went in those days. It is probable that Earl Donald had other reasons for going to London at that particular time,—he feared, and not without reason, the anger of his sept, and he had not the courage to brave the storm.

His absence, however, gave little concern to the noble lady whom he had never treated as became a wife, and the daughter whose bright youth he was blighting, the daughter whose earliest recollections were darkened by his unkindness to herself, his neglect, and ill-treatment of her mother.

Many an hour did the Countess and her daughter spend in sad repining over the new misfortune that awaited them, and in eager consultation with the few trusty friends they had near them, as to whether anything could be done to avert the blow. Of these friends the most honored and honorable, both from age and position, was O'Sullivan More, the first in rank in MacCarthy's country, and hereditary marshal of his house. Dark grew the chieftain's brow as his eye rested on the girlish form of the Lady Ellen where she stood in the deep embrasure of a narrow splayed window looking pensively out on the sunlit mountains of Killarney, while he and her mother discussed in a low voice a step he had been proposing. Her face bore already the stamp of sorrow, sad to see in one so young, and her voice when she spoke had a tremulous tone very different from its merry ring but a few short months before.

"Before God, Countess! it shall not be!" said O'Sul-

livan with stern emphasis, speaking in the language of the country as, amongst themselves, all the Irish then did, even those of them, and they were comparatively few, who had learned to speak in the Saxon tongue. "Foul shame it were that the blood of the Geraldines and the MacCarthys should ever be mingled with that of the Brownes. You must e'en do as I say, and perchance it will avail us somewhat."

"Pray God it may, Sir Owen!" said the Countess with a heavy sigh.

"It were well to do it quickly," said O'Sullivan, "if we would have good come of it. MacCarthy once returned, we can do nothing."

"To-morrow, then, let it be! Alas! I fear it will nought avail. Surely the hand of God is heavy on our house!"

"Say not so, Honora Fitz-James!"† said O'Sullivan solemnly; "if there is power in Clan Carthy to prevent it, this great grief shall not come upon the daughter of the Geraldines. Be of good heart, Honora; for if this plan should fail, we will try another that cannot fail. I will now rejoin the chieftains in the hall. They are sorely troubled about this matter, and have come hither to know from your ladyship whether anything can be done to prevent this accursed marriage."

† It was the custom amongst the Irish and Anglo-Irish to call the wife by her own family name. So this lady being the daughter of James, the fifteenth Earl of Desmond, was called by her father's name. In the rural districts of Ireland this custom still prevails amongst the old families.

"Greet them well from me," said the Countess, her hollow cheek flushing for a moment, "tell them they are welcome to Pallice Castle, and bid them to the feast this evening. In the absence of MacCarthy, I pray you, Sir Owen, take the chief place. Say to the chiefs that my daughter and I are with them in heart, and hope to thank them in person to-morrow for their friendship in this hour of sorest need."

"Sweet Ellen," said the chieftain, approaching the younger lady and laying his hand on her shoulder with the paternal familiarity warranted by his age, and rank, and long tried friendship to her house; "sweet Ellen! why so sad? Cheer thee up, fair flower of Killarney! all is not lost that is in danger. Nicolas Brown shall never put ring on the daughter of MacCarthy More. Better a minstrel of Clan Carthy than an English undertaker."

The young lady started,—a deep crimson flush suffused her face, and she raised her eyes with a questioning look to the chieftain's face. O'Sullivan nodded and smiled, but nothing more he said; shaking the fair Ellen by the hand, and bowing respectfully to both ladies, he left the room.

The Countess soon after retired to her oratory, where many of her hours were spent in fervent prayer for the living and the dead. Alas! how few were the living who still had a place in the heart or the prematurely-aged lady of Clancarthy, but how many of the dead of her race, the martyred dead, were before her sorrowful mind in those tranquil

hours of prayer. Her three brothers, Gerald, John, and James, had all died in the cause of Ireland and the faith,—the former, the great rebel Earl of Desmond in hoary age in a Kerry cabin; the latter in early manhood on a Cork gibbet, and the bodies of all three had swung in chains in Irish air till they mouldered to dust, while their heads bleached in summer sun and winter snow on the top of English spears, the object of English scorn and derision. Oh, Countess of Clancarthy, how hard was it for you to pray for your enemies, the enemies of your faith. That you did so we are well assured, and high must be your place, daughter of the martyred Geraldines, in the glory of your Lord!

Left thus alone, Lady Ellen retired to her own apartments in one of the towers of the Castle. There her maids were in waiting, but passing them with a gentle smile where they sat at work in her ordinary sitting-room, some with the needle, some with the distaff, she retired to a small room that would now be called her *boudoir*, then in minstrel parlance her “bower,” occupying one angle of the Castle keep. There she threw herself on the carved oaken seat that occupied the recess of the one narrow window the room contained, and sat, while the yellow sun went down, looking listlessly out on those scenes so lovely and so familiar, which could charm her eyes no more.

What was the strange emotion that, like the rippel on a stream, played over her dark Spanish features,

usually haughty in repose? What was the thought that brought the light to her tear-dimmed eyes, and the blood to her pallid cheek? Of whom, or of what was the Lady Ellen thinking that evening hour in her darkening tower chamber? Surely her thoughts were not of Nicholas Browne, the surveyor's son of Mollahiff!

The shadows crept over the highest mountains that kept watch over the placid waters; the sun had long since faded from Tore and Toomies, and the Eagle's Nest, and the woody steep of Glenna were enveloped in the grey mists that curled upwards from the lakes and islands; still Ellen sat in a *reverie* that, judging by her face, was not all of sorrow. The parting words of O'Sullivan had struck one chord in her heart that was not of sadness.

As the stars came out in heaven, and the darkness gathered round, the silken tapestry which hung within the doorway was gently raised, and a timid girlish face peeped in; it was that of Una, Lady Ellen's favorite attendant.

"Does my lady wish a light?" she softly asked.

"Not yet," her lady replied; "but bring my harp, and stay!"—

"It is almost dark!" whispered the attendant, as she placed the instrument before her mistress.

"Not so dark as my soul, Una O'Leary!" was the dreary answer; "but listen now while I play, and tell me if you know this air."

It was not an Irish melody that flowed from be-

neath the lady's taper fingers after she had played a wild sweet prelude. It was a Spanish air, one of those serenades both gay and tender, which were then as now, distinctly characteristic of the old Iberian music. The strain was repeated a second time, and still Una was silent; all at once, however, she clapped her tiny hands, and said with sudden animation—

"I know it, Lady Ellen, I know it now. It is"—

"Speak lower, little Una! while you tell me!"

"It is the same that we heard that foreign minstrel play in a boat one night near Dunkerron Castle."

"I am glad to find that I play it correctly," said the lady, in a voice which she vainly strove to keep from trembling. "I have often tried it since, it pleased me so much then."

She then dismissed her attendant, and went to join her lady-mother, in whose apartments their evening meal was served.

That over, the Countess and her daughter sat together conversing in low tones on the all-absorbing topic of the Earl's traffic with the Brownes. Chilled and broken as was the Lady Clancarthy's spirit by the manifold sorrows of her life, a spark of the old fire was kindled in her heart by the last crowning indignity offered by her unworthy husband to her blood as well as his own. Christian woman as she was, and chastened by sore affliction, she could not behold unmoved the disgrace that threatened two noble houses should the heiress of MacCarthy More become

the wife of a man who was, in her regard, little better than a menial.

"I tell thee my daughter," said the prematurely aged matron, "I would sooner see thee dead and laid in the tomb of the MacCarthys, than see thee wedded to that Saxon churl!"

"And I would rather die an hundred times, mother mine," replied Lady Ellen, with unwonted energy, "than bring such foul disgrace on your name and mine. Better far the tomb in Mucruss Abbey than the stone-wall house at Molahiff."

Thus the mother and daughter talked while the night wore on, and the sounds of music and joyous revelry came softened from the hall far below, where the chiefs of Clan Carthy were seated round the festive board, pledging each other in Spanish wine, and vowing to protect at all hazards, the fair daughter of MacCarthy from the degradation to which her mean-spirited father would ruthlessly consign her. Hope seemed to revive in the hearts of mother and daughter as the loud-spoken words were borne to their ears, and with lightened hearts they knelt to offer their nightly orisons to God above.



## CHAPTER II.

NEXT morning there was the bustle of departure in the court-yard of the Palace. While the earliest sunbeams gilt the mountain-tops, and Killarney's Lakes and the Laune river slept in shade, saddle-girths were being tightened, and a band of MacCarthy's gallowlasses stood ready to mount their horses, to escort the wife and daughter of their chief on a visit they prosposed making. The court-yard, or rather the "bawn," presented a gay scene that bright spring morning. It was full of armed men, for with the followers of MacCarthy More, were mingled those of the other chieftains who had staid in the castle over night. There were O'Sullivans from the mountain coasts bordering on Bantry and Berehaven, O'Donoghues from the hills and glens and the Lake shores, O'Learys, and O'Mahons, MacAuliffes, MacDonoghs and O'Driscolls from the fertile plains of Cork, each bearing the well-known cognizance of his chief embroidered on the short cloak, or cotta, which formed the outer garment of those Irish soldiers. While the kerns and gallowlasses chatted merrily amongst themselves, and the horse-boys, holding the horses of the several chiefs, awaiting their appearance from the castle, amused themselves with playing off practical jokes at the expense of the long-haired clansmen around them, a far different scene was going for-

ward within the castle, where, in the privacy of Lady Clancarthy's oratory, with only the Countess, her daughter, and their attendants, for a congregation, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass was being offered up by a venerable priest, whose snow-white locks and furrowed cheeks were more from sorrow and suffering than from age.

A strange and awful thing it was that in those stormy days of religious persecution it was a capital offence to celebrate Mass, and almost as great a one to assist at its celebration. Hence it was that the chapels originally attached to the feudal castles of the chiefs had fallen into disuse, ever since the inauspicious reign of Henry VIII., and the priests who ventured to remain in the country secretly harbored in the dwellings of the Catholic lords and gentry, or hiding, with the ingenious aid of the faithful people of the country, in caves and vaults, and other secret places, might only say Mass by stealth, with every precaution against discovery. As in the present instance, it was not deemed expedient to celebrate Mass publicly, even in the castle of MacCarthy More, fearing lest one of the "meaner sort" might be tempted by the large reward offered for the apprehension of a priest, or any information concerning the solemnization of those "Popish rites," which were amongst the highest crimes known to those Tudor laws.

No sunbeam glanced through stained window on priest or altar that day in Pallice Castle; the room

in which alone the Countess of Clancarthy might dare to have an altar erected was small and dark, within the thickness of the massive wall, as even the sleeping apartments ordinarily were in those ancient castles of the Irish chiefs.

Mass over, the priest retired to the inner chamber, connected with the Oratory by a long and narrow passage, known but to few, where his days and nights were spent during the Earl's absence,—for it was only during his absence that the holy man was permitted to remain within the walls, so great was the chieftain's dread of drawing down on himself the terrible anger of Elizabeth, by harboring a "Popish priest."

A little while after the Countess and her daughter were standing in the hall below, receiving the respectful salutations of the chiefs, and exchanging with them those friendly greetings which marked the social intercourse of the great feudal families and the tributary chiefs who were allied by blood to their respective houses. With their whole figures enveloped in the large loose cloaks worn by the ladies of those days when travelling, the large riding hoods thrown back, revealing the haggard, care-worn face of the elder lady,—like some classic ruin, noble even in decay,—and the bright, though dark features of the younger, subdued, and pale and pensive, yet lovely still,—the mother and daughter stood, surrounded by the warrior chiefs, some of whom were already gray and old, others fresh and buoyant as

the young deer of Killarney's woods, when starting on their course, all bending with chivalrous homage before the wife and daughter of MacCarthy. It was, in sooth, a goodly picture, its effect heightened by the antique features of the ancient hall, its trophies of war and chase, its spears, and shields, and banners, intermingled, here and there, with the huge antlers of the red deer that even then made their home in the Kerry forests.

The salutations over, O'Sullivan announced to the ladies that some of their friends meant to accompany them; "these times are not safe, Dame Honora," said the Kerry chieftain, with a grim smile, "there might be some between this and Cork who would deem it a good day's work to seize the wife and daughter of MacCarthy More, in which case," he added significantly, "Donald MacCarthy might have to mortgage some more land to the Brownes to provide a ransom."

The ladies being only too glad to accept the friendly escort, they were soon mounted on their palfreys, and the gallant cavalcade set forward at a round pace, taking the Kenmare road.

Some hours after, while the day was still young, the ladies of Olancarthy alighted from their palfreys at the door of Shandon Castle, where Sir Warham St. Leger, the Queen's general, then had his abode. A stern old soldier was Sir Warham St. Leger, one of the last to whom a gentle lady, especially a lady of Irish blood, would look for sympathy

and counsel in such a case, yet it was precisely to him that the Countess of Clancarthy and her daughter had recourse.

In less troublous times it would have been strange to see these noble ladies, with the Irish gentlemen who accompanied them, ushered through files of English men-at-arms into the presence of the Queen's chief captain in Munster; then, nothing was strange in Ireland, for the simple reason that the strangest things were so constantly occurring, that people ceased to wonder at anything.

Rough as the general was by nature, he received the ladies with as much courtesy as could be expected from a man whose life had been mostly spent in camps. To O'Sullivan and the other chiefs he was fain to be civil, all of them being at that particular time "under protection."

"Your pleasure, Countess?" said St. Leger, after the ladies were seated in the old fortress hall, he himself standing uncovered before them, in his well-worn buff coat and slashed doublet.

St. Leger was a man of few words, and Lady Clancarthy knew it.

"We come, Sir Warham St. Leger," she replied, "to crave your good offices with the Queen's highness in regard to the dealings of my lord and husband with Sir Valentine Browne, to whom he hath, as we learn promised my daughter, the Lady Ellen here present, in marriage, for his second son, Nicholas."

"What fault does your ladyship find with young

Browne?" said St. Leger sharply. "Sooth to say, he hath no lack of lands or livings."

"Not he, indeed," said O'Sullivan More, promptly—he was fearful lest the Countess should say something that might give offence where it was necessary to conciliate; little could be said against the Brownes that did not apply as well to St. Leger himself,—  
"Not he, indeed, Sir Warham; but you must yourself admit that the daughter and heiress of MacCarthy More"—St. Leger frowned—"I mean the Earl of Clancarthy, ought to look higher than Master Nicholas Browne."

This politic speech had its effect. "What sayeth the young lady?" the general asked, turning abruptly to the Lady Ellen. "Young Nicholas Browne is not to be despised for a husband."

"I pray you, Sir Warham," said the young lady, looking up into the old man's war-worn face with a heightened color, and a moistened eye, "I pray you, name him not as a husband for me. I know you have great favor with the Queen's Majesty."—Sir Warham smiled down on the fair pleader.—"Use it, I entreat you, in our behalf—for my lady mother dislikes the match no less than I do."

"You speak well for one so young," said the grim veteran, "I would that our sovereign lady, Elizabeth, heard you plead your cause. I warrant me, she could not refuse the petition of so fair a lady."

"There be some who say," whispered O'Leary to McDonogh behind Sir Warham's back, "that a

lady fair and young would find little favor in the eyes of Elizabeth Tudor."

"It seemeth strange to us, Sir Warham," said the Countess, with as much composure as she could assume, "that the Earl of Clancarthy should think of bestowing his daughter—alas! his only child,"—she added with a sigh,—“on a gentleman of so little account as Master Browne. The gentlemen of our house, some of whom you see here present, are all opposed to the match."

"Truly, I know that," said Sir Warham, testily, "for I have had letters from more than one of them on the subject. I would the matter were ended one way or the other."

"But will you not aid us, Sir Warham?" said the Countess, still more earnestly than before. "Of a surety, if you will only make known to the Queen how much my daughter and myself mislike the match, she will be graciously pleased to consider our case, and have regard to the honor of a noble house."

"And you, Sir Owen O'Sullivan," said the General, in his abrupt way, "you and all these gentlemen are of a like mind with regard to this matter?"

"Truly we are, Sir Warham," said the chieftain, speaking for the others; "we came hither in attendance on the Countess and the young lady, but since you put the question, I will tell you truly: there is not a follower of the MacCarthy——"

"The Earl of Clancarthy, Sir Owen!"

"Well, the Earl be it, then,—but be he Earl or what he may, he hath made little of the whole Clan Carthy by so much as naming this Nicholas Browne for his daughter's husband. So much are the chiefs against it, that I fear it will breed disturbance in that country if the thing be not prevented in time."

"But I see not how it can be prevented," said St. Leger, the cloud again gathering on his brow, "neither you nor I have any right to go between the Earl of Clancarthy and his own child."

"But there is one who has the right!" said the Countess, eagerly.

The veteran shook his head. "I know not that *she* will put a stop to the marriage. Nicholas Browne is an English gentleman; his father has, in his time, done good service to the Queen's cause, for which her highness has seen fit to reward him as became her royal goodness. She will not deny his son this new means of advancing his fortune."

The general was evidently becoming impatient, seeing which, the Countess and her daughter rose, and the elder lady said, with that mild dignity which was her characteristic trait,—

"In which case, Sir Warham, our visit hath been of no avail, and we have but to crave your pardon for intruding ourselves upon you. We will now take our leave, hoping that you will still not refuse to put in a word with the Queen's highness, in regard to this, our humble suit."

"Mother," said the young lady, while the hot

blood of her proud race mantled on her cheek, "Mother, we have said enough: more were unbecoming. We are not such poor beggars, but we can help ourselves, if others will not."

"Well said, Lady Ellen!" cried a young chief of the O'Donoghoes. "If your father had a little of your spirit, we need never have been here on such an errand."

A sardonic smile curled the lip of Queen Elizabeth's officer as he listened to these ebullitions of youthful feeling; with cold and formal courtesy he accompanied the ladies to the door, and there bowed them out, nodding carelessly to the chieftains, who returned his salute in the same fashion.

"Fare you well, Sir Warham!" said O'Sullivan More. "You shall be bidden to Lady Ellen's wedding, an' she marries Nicholas Browne!"

"Well! Sir Owen," said the Countess, as O'Sullivan rode up by her side when they had left Shandon towers some distance behind. "Methinks there is little hope in that quarter."

"Your thought is mine, dame Honora! It were best not trust to so frail a plank. We must convey Ellen to some place of safety where neither MacCarthy nor the Brownes can reach her."

"Alas! whither could we send her that Donald would not find her out?" said the Countess, in a tone of great despondency. "And yet it breaks my heart to think that my poor Ellen, the only child that cruel death has left me, should marry a low-born Englishman, and a heretic to boot!"

"It shall not be, Honora Fitz-James, take my word for it!" said O'Sullivan with stern emphasis. "An' Donald MacCarthy will not listen to reason from any of us, we have a right to prevent this disgrace from coming upon us all, in whatever way we can. I will think the matter over as we ride home, and see what can be done."

The party rode on in silence, each one plunged in anxious thought. Mid-day was past, and they were nearing the lake shore, when, at a sharp turn in the mountain-road, they encountered a small company of horsemen, the foremost of whom was a stout, burly, fresh-faced man of some thirty years or thereabouts, clad in the buff coat and doublet of the English gentleman of that day, beneath which was the breast-plate and other pieces of light armor. A steel morion on the head completed the gentleman's costume. As he rode in advance of the others, they were evidently his retainers.

The road being narrow, not more than two horses of either party could pass abreast, and O'Sullivan called out,—“Fall back there, and make way for the Countess of Clancarthy!”

“That will I do right willingly,” said the Englishman, bowing low to the name, “but not for your bidding, Sir Owen O'Sullivan. I would have you speak civilly, an' you speak to me.”

“Small courtesy is due from any here to your father's son, Nicholas Browne!” said the chief haughtily; “make way, I say again!”

"Not at your bidding, say I again," returned young Browne defiantly, "though all the O'Sullivan's in Kerry were at your back."

"Why stand parleying there, Sir Owen?" called out young O'Donoghoe from behind; "ride on, and let the English churl take the consequences if he will not give way!"

Still Browne moved not, and his followers were seen to grasp their weapons. Pale with terror, Lady Clancarthy said,—“for God's sake, Sir Owen, let him pass!”

"Ay! let him pass, gentlemen all!" said the fair Ellen, in English; "it is for you to teach him what is due to ladies. Fall back, friends!"

"We may not refuse you, Lady Ellen!" said O'Sullivan, "the daughter of MacCarthy commands here!"

The Irish gentlemen immediately reined in their horses at one side the narrow mountain road to let the others pass, the two ladies with cutting politeness doing the same. Browne, nettled and ashamed, still held back.

"Lady Clancarthy," he stammered, "I owe you an apology. Had your ladyship said but a word, or the Lady Ellen, that so I might save mine honor in regard to O'Sullivan and the others——"

"I pray you name it not, Master Browne," said the Countess more haughtily than her wont. "We ask favors only of our friends; we await your passage!" And she motioned him onwards with her riding-whip.

Seeing there was nothing for it but to move on, Browne set spurs to his horse and dashed forward ; as he passed the younger lady, her horse, a spirited one, began to prance restively, which Nicholas seeing stopped, and caught hold of the rein.

"Let go the bridle !" said Lady Ellen, in a tone of authority, "I can manage the horse if you will but go on. Let go, I say !"

Chafing with anger and vexation the English squire dropped the bridle and rode on, amid the jeers and taunts of the bold Kerry chieftains who much enjoyed the discomfiture of the audacious aspirant to Ellen's hand.

"So that is Nicholas Browne !" said the young lady when she had succeeded in quieting her palfrey ; "truly, he does credit to his father's fat beeves. A winsome knight is he for lady's love !"

"Nay, sweet Ellen ! you are cruel !" said O'Sullivan, with grave irony, "you forget that the gentleman is soon to be MacCarthy More's son-in-law !"

The young beauty's laugh rang out none the less sweetly that it was bitter and ironical. "He MacCarthy More's son-in-law !" she said with an energy that was almost fierce. "That will be, Sir Owen ! when Toro and Mangerton come together,—when Ellen MacCarthy forgets the blood that is in her veins !"

"My child," said her gentle mother, "it is not for us to say what shall or shall not be. The will of God must be done."

"I know that, mother mine," rejoined her daughter; "but I know, too, that God never willed a daughter of yours to be the wife of Nicholas Browne. Let us say no more about him, dearest mother! For me, I would fain forget that such as he is alive!"

"Would to God that we could all forget!" sighed the Countess, "but, alas! alas! we cannot!"

After partaking of the generous hospitality of Pallice Castle, the chiefs, with the exception of O'Sullivan More, and one or two others, chief officers of the Earl's household, took advantage of the bright light of a full moon to return back to their homes. It was a cheering and a picturesque sight, as the ladies stood on the ramparts of the castle watching each chief with his followers, riding successively out from the arched gateway below, then winding along by the Lake shore till a turn of the road hid them from view. It was like a scene of faëry; and a proud smile flitted over Ellen's face as she thought that all these noble gentlemen, and many another, called MacCarthy lord, and were bound to follow him to the field. It was a lovely night, and no fairer scene did the round moon gild on earth than that which lay before the eyes of the ladies of Clancarthy.

"Far in the west,  
Where the Lake's blue breast  
Reposed, like an angel of light at rest,  
The rich rays there,  
Seemed spirits of air,  
That wanton'd about in their silver hair."

Then and there it was that the sagacious chief of Clan Sullivan submitted to the Countess and her daughter the new plan he had devised for defeating the Earl's unaccountable project.

"If we find," said he, "that nothing turns up to prevent this marriage before Donald's return, methinks it were worth the trying, Dame Honora, to send our black rose here straightway over the mountains to O'Rourke's country. In the fastnesses of the Brenny she will be safe from pursuit, and Brian O'Rourke is just the man to stand by a lady in distress. What think you, Countess, and you, fair Ellen, of this notion of mine?"

Both ladies agreed that the scheme was a good one: "I know the chieftain of Brenny, O'Rourke, well," said the Countess, "and sure I am that he would protect my child from ill as he would his own blood. The plan is a good one, Sir Owen!"

"So it appears to my poor judgment. None of us hereabouts in Cork or Kerry could hope to keep the young lady from her father's knowledge, whereas Brian O'Rourke in his far country can do it, and he will, too, I know well."

"I will send off a trusty messenger to O'Rourke to-morrow," said the Countess, "making our hard case known to him, and then, if the worst happens, I will send Ellen's two foster-brothers and Una O'Leary with her to Dromahaire,\* where the chief can dispose her in a place of safety."

\* Dromahaire was, of old, the chief seat of the powerful

"The fewer attendants you send there will be the less danger of discovery," said O'Sullivan in his dry, sententious way. "But I see the moon is already on the wane, and, with your permission, gentle ladies, I will seek repose. I must make an early start to-morrow. So fare you well, ladies, and if any new danger arise, you can let me know by a sure hand." As he passed where Ellen stood, apparently lost in thought, the Chieftain laid his hand lightly on her head for a moment and whispered—"I tell you again, keep up your heart. There's one I know that's able for MacCarthy and the Brownes. Never you fear!"

Without waiting to mark the effect of his words, O'Sullivan hurried away, and the ladies soon after descended the narrow stone stairs, within the massive walls, which led from the ramparts to the inner parts of the castle. This staircase was lit by lamps attached to the wall at long intervals. As the two dark robed figures descended the stairs with noiseless step, their faces looking wan in the dim, uncertain light, they might easily have been taken for the spirits of departed *châtelaines*, doomed to wander for a time through the lone recesses of their ancient dwelling. Yet there was a smile on Ellen's lip, and a bright light in her eyes that spoke of reviving hope. A second time had the words of O'Sullivan More recalled her from the depths of despondency.

chieftains of Breffny O'Rourke, now the Country of Leitrim. It was a strong fortress, and in troublous times, withstood some hard sieges.

With unwonted fervor the maiden prayed that night, when she knelt beside her mother in the oratory,—that God would send some means of delivering her from the dark doom that threatened to blight her youth's fond hopes, and plunge her in a sea of life-long misery.

Dismissing Una whom she found waiting in her chamber, the fair girl sat musing long on the chances for and against her. The moonlight streamed in from the high, narrow window. No sound broke the stillness within or without, save the heavy, measured tramp of the warder, as he paced his lonely round on the battlements above, the shrill cry of the eagle from the mountains, or the lone heron from the lake's wooded shore. It was the time of all others for a young maiden's heart to wander away through the land of dreams on the wings of imagination. What form was it that flitted ever before her mental vision? Far away it seemed, and indistinctly seen, with no light in the cold eyes, no words of love or kindness on the lips, and yet it would come, do as she might, and mingle with her every dream of the future. Could there be any connection between this haunting image and the words of Sir Owen O'Sullivan? Ellen could hardly tell. One thing she knew <sup>and</sup> felt, that the chieftain's words had power to awaken feelings new and strange within her: that they conjured up many a happy thought, many a brilliant hope from her spirit's depths. Before this all powerful spell the hated image of burly Master Browne faded from

Ellen's mind, and sweet peace took possession of her soul as she laid her head on the pillow where the silver moonlight slept.



## CHAPTER III.

WHILST the Lady of Clancarthy, and her fair daughter, and all the friends of their house, were bewailing the Earl's infatuation in choosing such a husband for his only child, and devising means of averting the blow that seemed ready to fall on the once royal sept, a gentleman of the MacCarthys, coming direct from London, where he had been for some time past, made his appearance before Sir Thomas Norreys, the Queen's Vice-President of Munster, in the ancient City of Limerick, to lodge certain complaints against the Earl of Clancarthy.

This gentleman's name was Florence MacCarthy. He was son of the late, and nephew of the present, MacCarthy Reagh, the second in rank of the three great chiefs of the Clan Carthy. Although still young, he had served in the late war against the rebel Earl of Desmond, and like his father before him, Sir Donald MacCarthy Reagh, his character for loyalty was above suspicion. Much of his time had of late been spent at the English Court, and, when in Ireland, he was a frequent visitor to the English officials in Cork and Limerick. He was, therefore, well and no less favorably known to Sir Thomas Norreys, who received him with the frank courtesy of the gallant soldier he was. There were worse men amongst Elizabeth's officers in Ireland than stout Sir Thomas

Norreys, whose brother, Sir John, a man of a similar stamp, he had succeeded in office, on the sudden death of the latter, a little before the opening of our story.

Florence MacCarthy had a considerable list of charges to make against the Earl. It appeared that he had been lending the aged spendthrift large sums of money on bond and mortgage, which mortgages the Earl now disputed, and was going to forfeit his securities for the same. Amongst other bad treatment this "gentleman of the MacCarthys" had received at the hands of his unscrupulous kinsman was his violation of a promise he had made him to give him his daughter in marriage, whereas he was now about marrying her to Master Nicholas Browne.

"That," said he, "cannot now be helped, for I hear the deeds are signed and sealed, and only the Earl's return is awaited to finish the business. But the money I advanced to the Earl in his needs I have no mind to lose. Nevertheless, if I must be the loser, Sir Thomas, it would please me better that you should be the gainer than this thriftless Earl, whose loyalty to her gracious Majesty is but loose and ill-assured."

"What would you, then, Master Florence?" inquired Norreys.

"I would transfer my claims on the Earl's lands to you, whose power to enforce them is greater than mine."

Sir Thomas shook his head. "To that I say nay, Master Florence! that country of Desmond is too

hard to reach. An' the MacCarthy, took it in head to resist the claims, mine were worth less than yours in that wild country. I like not the plan."

"Truth to tell it *is* a wild country," said MacCarthy, gravely, "I fear there is little respect for law, or right, there, save that of MacCarthy More,—as they call the Earl. But the money I have sunk there I cannot afford to lose; an' you will not take the transfer of my claims, Sir Thomas, I must e'en risk a journey into those parts of Kerry where the mortgaged lands are situated, hoping to receive somewhat of my rightful due."

"You purpose going thither, then?" asked Norreys, with some hesitation.

"With your Honor's permission, and a written order to that effect. The Earl once returned to those parts, my journey were of small avail. The crafty old fox would outwit me in the matter of the mortgages, as he hath done in that of the marriage."

"Is it well assured that Master Browne will have the Earl's daughter?"

"Ay, marry, will he, and his lands to boot. The marriage troubles me but little, seeing that I, at this present time, am under promise to marry the daughter of O'Sullivan Beare, but my lands or my money I would fain have from the Earl, to whom I owe no good will."

"O'Sullivan Beare!" repeated Norreys slowly and musingly.

"Ay, marry, Sir Thomas! a fair lady as any in Munster."

The Vice-President was silent a moment. "The Queen must know of this," he said, within himself, "these alliances amongst the Irishry import her much."

Keen eyes were watching his face, and reading his thoughts; a smile passed over the face of Florence MacCarthy, but the smile vanished, and the face was placid and composed as before, when the English general turned his eyes on him again.

"May I hope for the pass, Sir Thomas, to go into the Earl's country?"

"I see not why I should withhold it," said Norreys, "knowing your well assured loyalty; since you have been so hardly dealt by, it is meet that you should have the means of righting yourself in regard to the mortgages."

So the order was written empowering "Mr. Florence MacCartie," as the name was then written, "to make a journey into the country of Desmond on business appertaining to certain dealings of his with the Earl of Clancarthy."

Feuds and dissensions between the lords and gentlemen of "the mere Irish" were always matter of undisguised satisfaction to the English Queen and her officials. The prospect of effecting any such result was eagerly transmitted to her English ministers, either to Walsingham, her Secretary of State, or her life-long confidant, Cecil, Lord Burleigh, as the most acceptable item of Irish news. With uncommon pleasure, therefore, did Sir Thomas Norreys sign

that order for an undoubtedly loyal gentleman of "the MacCarties," to go into the country of the head of his house with such hostile purpose. It was truly encouraging, from an English point of view, to see such enmity arising between two great branches of the powerful Clan Carthy.

It is hard to say what particular thoughts were passing in the mind of this young Irish gentleman, fresh from the Court of London, as he journeyed on, with one or two attendants, into the remote regions of Kerry. Considering the peculiar nature of his errand it was strange that he took with him no larger following. It was well known that he stood high in favor with his uncle, Sir Owel MacCarthy Reagh, and that he had had command, during the late war, of the entire contingent furnished by the MacCartys of Carbery, yet neither kerne nor gallowglass rode in his company to the wilds of Kerry to enforce claims to large tracts of land and strong castles belonging to the lord of all that country. A bold man must have been Florence MacCarthy, for all his bland courtesy of manner, and his calm, passionless face. With his tall commanding figure, far above the average height of men, and his air of high superiority, he looked just the man to maintain his own rights against any odds, and at any risk; he looked, too, like a man who would do nothing rashly or imprudently, yet here he was, riding post haste into the country of MacCarthy More, with intentions hostile to that chieftain, yet having with him but one or two

attendants, whose dress and equipments were as unwarlike as his own! It was not so that lords or gentlemen were wont to travel in those troublous times when on hostile purpose bent.

They were lovely scenes through which Florence journeyed, wild, and fair and romantic as any in Ireland; and as the smile of early summer, breaking at intervals through the gray rain-clouds of the parting spring, lit up the mountain-side, and the rock, and the torrent, the ancient woods and the smiling meadows by the rippling streams, the young man's eye brightened, and a smile of strange significance flitted over his handsome features. But the thoughts of his heart were not thus to be read, for the face was not a frank face,—it was rather one that had from earliest youth been trained to conceal what passed within.

What course he intended to adopt for the enforcing of his claims on the Earl's mortgaged lands, in the absence of the proprietor, it were hard to say. What man could do by merely legal means, that Florence could do, for his knowledge of English laws was not small, and his mind was naturally keen and subtle. It was natural, therefore, that he would not have taken such a journey,—at a time when it was necessary to ride all the way on horseback, and when the disturbed state of the country rendered traveling unsafe,—had he not a fair prospect of reaping some positive advantage.

Let us follow him, however, into Kerry, and see

how he managed to accomplish the arduous task he had undertaken.

It was late evening when Florence MacCarthy and his two attendants rode up to the gate of Pallice Castle. To the warder's challenge, in Irish, from the gate-tower, the answer from below was, "Fineen MacDonogh,\* with letters from MacCarthy More, in England."

Soon the heavy outer gates were thrown open, and the light of torches flashed out on the darkness, revealing the three horsemen without and the gray old porter within, who, bowing low, conducted the visitor and his two followers across the Lawn, or court-yard, to the inner gate, where Florence dismounting, flung the reins to a gilly, or horse-boy, several of whom made their appearance, and followed the ancient servitor of MacCarthy More up the ladder, which in many of the Irish fortresses of those days, led to the hall, instead of the broad stone steps of after and more peaceful times. These ladders were merely hooked to the walls, so that they could easily be drawn up, in case of danger from without.

In the hall Florence found some other "gentlemen of the MacCarthys;" all inferior to himself in position, but not unknown to him, it would seem, for in reply to their cool and scarcely civil salutation, he greeted them severally by name, offering his hand

\* Fineen, was the Irish rendering of Florence, and MacDonogh, or *the son of Donogh*, was the gentleman's Clan name.

to each with the warmth of a friend and kinsman. But still the cloud lowered on every brow.

"We little expected to see you here, F'ineen Mac-Donogh," said one of the gentlemen, a gray-headed, grim clansman, who had for many a stirring year filled the onerous post of seneschal to MacCarthy More. "Queen's officers are rare visitors to Pallice, and when they come, they come unsent for like the bad weather."

"Nay, nay, Teague," said Florence cheerfully and lightly, and he would have laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, but it was gruffly shaken off; "nay, nay, my old friend, you must not call me a Queen's officer. I am plain Florence MacCarthy, nothing more, nothing less. It is long since I left the service of the English Queen, and left it for ever and aye."

"But you did not leave it till you helped to leave the Desmond low, and he your own flesh and blood. It was shame and disgrace for a MacCarthy to help the bloody Sassenagh against the Geraldine."

"But you know, my good Teague, *it is never too late to mend!* Let me whisper a word in your ear."

Reluctantly the old man consented, but whatever the word was, or rather the words, they had the effect of smoothing Teague's brow, and bringing something like a smile to his weather-bronzed face. It was clear he said nothing of the mortgages.

Before any more could be said, a messenger from the Countess came with her friendly greeting to

Florence, requesting him to accept the hospitality of the Castle for that night, and she would be glad to see him on the morrow.

It must have been an awkward predicament in which the young man found himself that night; coming to the Pallice to look after his money or property, and still obliged to lodge under the roof of the man whose dishonorable dealings, and utter disregard of promises, had rendered his coming necessary. Yet all things considered, he put a good countenance on the matter, and bore himself as though he came with the best intentions towards the Earl and his family, and had a right to the best entertainment the house could afford. He, however, avoided the wine cup, and, pleading fatigue, retired earlier than was customary in that house, or at that time.

Some two hours after, when silence reigned throughout the Castle, a page tapped softly at the tower chamber, to which Florence had been shown; and the promptness with which the young gentleman answered the summons, without any change in his apparel, showed that he had been waiting.

The page bowed, the gentleman motioned for him to lead the way, and, by the dim light of a lamp which the boy carried, they both descended the stairs and traversed the large central apartment—which, on every story, extended through the entire space within the walls of the keep,—stopping at length at a door on the farther side.

Again the page tapped, and the door was opened by one of the Lady Clancarthy's waiting-women, who immediately retired to the inner apartment, and the Countess herself advanced to meet her visitor. The page remained at the door as if to guard against intrusion.

Strange to say, the meeting was rather friendly than otherwise. The Countess, with the grave condescension of her age and rank, extended her hand, over which the young man bowed respectfully.

"You are welcome to the Pallice, Mr. Florence MacCarthy," she said in English; probably using that language as less likely to be understood by any of her attendants who were within hearing. "The letters you brought me from MacCarthy please me well. I thank God that Donald hath not wholly lost his senses."

"Your ladyship agrees, then, to have that matter so settled?" said Florence, habitually cautious in his words.

"Ah! woe is me," said the Countess, sadly; "my consent imports but little! Natheless, there are some few questions I would fain have answered before the thing goes farther."

"First, let me lead your ladyship to a seat!" The Countess bowed, and seated herself, motioning her visitor to do the same.

Long they talked, at first guardedly and with an excess of courtesy on both sides, that spoke no community of feeling; gradually, however, this restraint

seemed to wear away, the voices sank to a lower and more confidential tone, and the lady's face lost much of its care-worn look as she listened to the explanations, and hopes, and projects which the young man rapidly poured forth in low, earnest tones.

The night hours passed away, and when, at early morning, the Lady Ellen MacCarthy entered her mother's oratory, where the priest was about to commence Mass, she was surprised to see the usual congregation, consisting of the Countess, her own, and her daughter's female attendants, increased by the presence of a stranger, a young man of noble aspect, and commanding mien. The celebration of the Divine Mysteries engrossed all attention, and Ellen scrupulously avoided looking around, although the unwonted presence of a stranger, and such a stranger, in that secret chapel whose awful rites were forbidden by English law, under fearful penalties, was a cause of distraction to the young daughter of MacCarthy More, in her life of still seclusion. Ever came the thought into her mind, "Have I not seen that face before?" and ever she strove to banish the distraction, by fixing her mind more steadily on the mystic rites accompanying the great sacrifice of the new law. Oh! solemn and beautiful, and ineffably touching, was the celebration of the Divine mysteries in those penal days, when even in the ancestral castle of a mighty chieftain, the descendant of a princely line, the lord of half a province, it was necessary to hide those sacred rites within the farthest

recesses of the ancient castles! In those days, when English laws had made it a penal offence for the priest to celebrate, or the laity to hear mass, the fervor of the faithful was equal to that of the first Christians who, in many respects, they so closely resembled.

After Mass,—when the oratory was left to its solemn silence, and the priest making his thanksgiving, kneeling on the altar step,—in the ante-chamber of the Countess, Lady Ellen was formally introduced by her mother to “ Mr. Florence MacCarthy, son of Donald MacCarthy Reagh.”

The meeting between the young gentleman and lady had in it nothing remarkable; neither appeared to take any particular notice of the other. There was, indeed, a deeper color than usual on Ellen's face, but that was easily accounted for by the maidenly modesty of one whose young life had been passed in nun-like seclusion. It seemed as though the young people had never met before, and consequently met then as strangers. With a half abstracted air Ellen listened while Florence, in answer to a question of the Countess as to how he had obtained permission to come into Desmond,—related, in a careless, off-hand way, how he had represented to Sir Thomas Norreys that important law business called him thither. Just then Lady Ellen chanced to look towards him, and the meaning smile with which he spoke of the “ law business ” did not escape her. She met his wandering glance, and it somehow awoke re-

collections of her earlier years. Still she could not remember having seen the gentleman before.

It was not the Lady Clancarthy's practice to appear with her daughter at the table in the banquetting-hall, where visitors and dependents, were wont to take their meals. Even when the Earl was at home it was only when, on special occasions, he commanded their presence, that his wife and daughter made their appearance at the public table of the household.

Lady Ellen was not a little surprised, when told by her mother that day to dress with unusual care, for they would go to dinner in the hall through respect for their newly arrived guest. But daughters in those days were not wont to raise objections to the expressed will of parents, and it is more than likely that the fair Ellen was rather pleased than otherwise to have the dull routine of her daily life even for once varied.

At dinner, therefore, the ladies took their seats on the dais at the head of the long table, with Florence MacCarthy at the right hand of the Countess. There were few others at the table whose gentle-blood entitled them to seats above the salt;\* of that small number was the aged seneschal and the other chief officers of the Earl's household. It was curious to see the change that had come over these followers

\* At the hospitable tables of the Celtic Chiefs both of Ireland and Scotland in those feudal times, all the household took their seats; the only difference being that the vassals and those who were not of gentle birth sat at the lower end, the salt in the center marking the division.

of MacCarthy, in their bearing towards Florence, during the few hours he had been in the Castle. They were now both cordial and respectful in their intercourse with him, which was all the more strange when one considered the ostensible object of his visit. Had he been making false representations,—imposing on the credulity of those simple Kerymen? How had he, who was over night received with marked distrust as a friend of the English, contrived, in the short interval, to gain the confidence and good will of them all? Had that word whispered in the seneschal's ear, produced so surprising a result?

One thing alone attracted Lady Ellen's notice, for not having witnessed Florence's first reception, she knew nothing of the change that had been wrought in his favor; ever since the news of the approaching marriage of his chieftain's daughter to the low-born Englishman, no sound of gladness had ever come from the harp of the aged minstrel, whose place of honor in the hall bespoke the chief bard of Clan Caúra. That day the old man struck his harp to a bold and blithesome strain, and as though seized with a prophetic spirit, he broke all at once into a wild and warlike song of triumph and of exultation. Greater still was Ellen's wonder when she heard his song of welcome to the dark-haired chief of the proud MacCaúra's line who had come to save his master's house from the dark doom of sorrow. With a newly awakened interest she glanced timidly at their visitor, but with a flushed cheek she withdrew her eyes,

when she saw that his were fixed on her face, with a proud and conscious look. Confused and agitated, yet scarce knowing why, she remained silent during the repast, and felt it a relief when she was again at liberty to seek the quiet of her own chamber. There stealing away even from her faithful Una, she tried to unravel the tangled skein that her thoughts had become, and to account to herself for the not unpleasant excitement that had taken the place of that dull despondency which for weeks and weeks had settled down upon her.

"What has happened?" said the soft voice of Una, and the little tire-woman crept close to her young mistress. "Will not my lady tell her faithful Una if any new mishap hath come?"

"I know not what there is to tell, Una!" Lady Ellen answered with a puzzled look. "I know but this that the gentleman whom we saw this morning at mass hath brought some strange trouble to the house. Pray God it be for good!—and yet" she added musingly as if to herself,—“and yet, it must be so, for old Eman's Harpechoed to day no sound of sorrow.”

Just then came a message from the Countess that she was going for a walk on the ramparts, and desired her daughter to accompany her.

At the foot of the stairs leading to the battlements Lady Ellen found her mother and their guest. It was a lovely evening, between day and dark, that

“—hour of silence and of rest,”  
to dreaming poets dear. As they emerged from the

cover of the roof on the open ramparts, and the blue evening sky with its first faint stars broke on their view, MacCarthy turning to the fairy-like scenes that were gradually waxing dim in the darkening twilight, said in a thoughtful tone—

“How long shall we call these scenes our own—we of the ancient race? How long shall MacCaura rule over Desmond?”

“Not long, I fear,” made answer the Countess, “if Donald may have his way. You have, doubtless, heard of his dealings with the Brownes, in regard to certain mortgages—as I am told the lawyers called them. If he be not stopped, the Brownes will soon have all.”

Florence MacCarthy laughed, and the Countess turned on him a look of inquiry.

“I crave your ladyship’s pardon,” he said, “but the Brownes are not likely to have *all*. MacCarthy More has borrowed money of others besides the Brownes, and made over lands to them, aye and castles too!—If the Brownes have Molahiffe, Castle Lough of the MacCarthies is as surely mine, with many a broad acre of the Earl’s country to boot!”

“Thine! Castle Lough thine?”

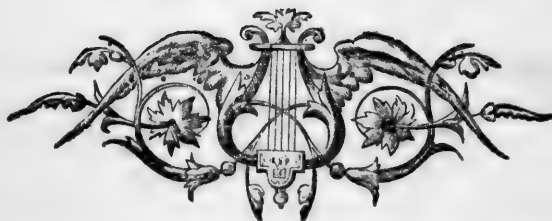
“Surely yes, dame Honora! as surely as money can buy it.”

“And you came in my father’s absence to claim your own!” exclaimed Ellen, speaking for the first time.

“Even so, fair lady. I came hither to claim my own.”

"Methinks," said the young lady, the pride of her race flashing in scorn from her dark eyes, "methinks it were more becoming a MacCarthy to come on such ungracious errand when the owner were at home!"

Again the young man laughed lightly and merrily. Lady Ellen walked indignantly away, leaving her mother to continue the subject or not.



## CHAPTER IV.

THE following morning, after the early breakfast of those days, Lady Ellen, weary of the still, monotonous life within doors, and longing, as young maidens will, when skies are bright and breezes are bland, for a stroll in the open air,—took Una with her, and wrapped in a cloak, the hood of which covered her head, left the castle unobserved by any save the porter at the gate, and went down to the river side. There, seating herself on a bank which commanded a view of the picturesque rapids, where the surplus waters of the Lower Lake run out, through the channel of the river's bed, to join that arm of the Atlantic called Court McSherry Bay. Listless her eyes wandered over the lovely scenes amid which her young life had passed, and not even the bright sheen of the dancing waters, or the feathery spray she had so often admired, could then restore the faded light of other days to her eyes. She felt sad and despondent. The passing gleam of hope, which the day before had cheered her with its smile, had fled, and the darkness of her doom again occupied her mind. In vain did Una try to arouse her young mistress from this sudden fit of dejection. She was ill at ease, she said, and could not think of anything but what was sad. At length Una, in a hesitating way, mentioned "the gentleman from Carbery."

"Nay, name him not," said the young lady, in a querulous tone, "what should we hope from him? he hath come here like any common English undertaker, to secure a share of my father's lands in the ruin that is coming upon us."

"Hist!" said Una, turning with a start, as a foot-step fell on the sward behind. Her mistress followed her example, and there stood Florence McCarthy, in the light hunting-garb of an Irish chieftain, admirably well adapted to shew off the noble proportions of his lofty figure.

A smile was on his face as he courteously saluted the young lady of Clancarthy. There was little doubt but he had overheard her contemptuous remark, and for a moment Lady Ellen felt confused; it was but for a moment, however, and then she arose, and with freezing coolness returned the young chieftain's salute. She would have passed on, but MacCarthy seemed determined not to be left behind; he walked on by her side, and Una fell back a few paces.

"You seem to have forgotten me, fair cousin!" the young man said after an embarrassing silence.

"Forgotten you!—how?"

"Do you not remember how we were playmates at Cork when I and my brother Dermot were there with my father, as you and your brother were with your parents, that time when Sir Henry Sydney kept royal state there on his passage through the Province? If you have forgotten those days, Ellen

MacCaura, not so have I, even though I be *like any common English undertaker!*"

There was sadness in the smile that rested on MacCarthy's face when Ellen looked up to it in surprise. "And are you the little Florence MacDonogh who, with your brother Dermod Moyle, drew my poor brother Teague out of the water that day when he fell into the river Lee?"

"Even so, fair lady!—somewhat taller I am, as you see, but natheless I am the same Florence MacDonogh. It grieved me sorely to hear of your brother's death."

"Ah! poor Teague!" sighed the young lady. It was all she could say. The sad and lonely fate of the loved companion of her childhood had thrown a dark, cold shadow over all the years of her life, since the news of his death had reached his desolate home.

Respecting her sorrow, and in part feeling it himself, Florence, too, was silent; he could not think without emotion of the lonely death of the young scion of his race, whom he had known a bright, playful child.

They had reached the Lake shore, and as each involuntarily paused to look at the entrancing scene that opened before them, MacCarthy suddenly said—

"Have I heard truly that MacCarthy More hath made choice of one of Valentine Browne's sons, for—" he stopped, then added, as if with an effort, speaking more rapidly—"for a son-in-law?"

"Alas, yes!" said the young lady, forgetting, for

the moment, her previous distrust. "Unhappy that I am, such, I fear, is my hard fate."

"An evil day were it, surely, when a daughter of MacCarthy became the wife of a scurvy English surveyor!—It must not, shall not be!—And yet," he added, with the same humorous smile as before, "what right have I to speak so—I who am like any common under-ker!"

"Nay, sir, if you must needs keep harping on that," said Lady Ellen shortly, "you may do so, and welcome. I said but what I thought, and mayhap I spoke the truth."

Florence MacCarthy stopped short in his walk, and turned his beaming eyes full on the lady's face. "But suppose I came not hither in search of money or land, as Sir Thomas Norreys and your fair self are of like mind in thinking I did?"

Lady Ellen's cheek turned pale, then red, under the searching look that was fixed on her face. She would say something, but she knew not what she could say with prudence.

"Can you think of nought else that brought me hither than the mortgages I hold on certain of your father's lands?"

The voice that spoke these words was trembling with emotion, and Ellen's cheek turned redder as she listened, but she made an effort to appear unconscious of the meaning of the words, and answered with forced composure—

"It were hard for me to guess."

"Then, will I tell you. I came hither to save one you know from a fate she dreads. To make her the wife, an' she will, of one as nobly born as herself; of one in whose veins flows the blood of her own princely fathers. Ellen MacCarthy, will you be my wedded wife, and so escape the shame and sorrow of marrying Nicholas Browne?"

These words, like an electric shock, restored Ellen to her usual self command, which was remarkable for her age.

"Florence MacCarthy," she said, looking him proudly, almost sternly in the face, "I may not promise that on such short acquaintance, and without my mother's knowledge."

"Your mother has gladly given her consent."

"Natheless, we met but yestermorn; it is over soon to——"

Florence interrupted her with a smile and a look that she could not interpret. "I see you are otherwise disposed," he said. "Think no more of it."

They had been for some time retracing their steps towards the Castle, and had now reached the sloping lawn before it.\* An exclamation of surprise escaped Lady Ellen; some half a score of horsemen, whom she recognised as followers of O'Sullivan More, were at the gate, newly arrived, and in the open door of the hall stood their chieftain smiling kindly and somewhat archly, on the two young scions of Clan

\* This lawn, in front of Pallice Castle, was then, as it has been since, called Gallows Field, as it was there that MacCarthy was wont to have criminal offenders executed.

Carthy advancing towards him. By his side was the Countess, who, hearing of her friend's arrival, had come down, even to the Castle door, to bid them welcome.

"*Cead mille failthe*,† Fincen!" was O'Sullivan's salutation, as he grasped Florence by both hands, after a cordial, fatherly greeting to Lady Ellen; "you have come none too soon, though I see you have lost no time. How goes on business?"

"You mean with Norreys?" said Florence, drawing a little behind the young lady, and making a sign with his hand which the elder chieftain, who was his brother-in-law, appeared to understand. For, without waiting for an answer to his question, he went on to ask the Countess whether she had heard from her husband since he saw her before.

The Countess delayed answering for a moment till her daughter and her attendant had disappeared on the steps within the wall\* leading to the household—"I received a letter by Florence here, the contents of which he will tell you. Donald desires that what we have in hand be done with speed. For his action in this matter, I forgive him all that hath gone be-apartments. Then she said, in a low, cautious voice,

† A hundred thousand welcomes.

\* The Castles of that day, amongst the Irish, were of a peculiar build, as their existing remains testify. Inside the outer door, reached by a ladder, there was another strong door leading to the hall, and between the two, a very narrow flight of stone steps led to the upper storeys of the building. These staircases were the scene of many a bloody hand to hand conflict, when the castles were stormed by an enemy.

fore. I pray you, gentlemen and dear friends, enter our poor abode. Mac Finan will see that your wants be duly cared for."

"That will I, Lady of Clan Carthy!" said the aged seneschal bowing low, "welcomer guests have never crossed the threshold of Pallice Castle."

"For me, I pray you excuse my absence," said the stately daughter of the Geraldine. "At the evening meal my daughter and I shall join your company."

She was going to ascend the stairs when Florence said something to her in a low whisper, evidently making a request, to which she smilingly assented, and leaving the chieftains to enjoy themselves in their own way, with the gentlemen of the Earl's household, she hastened to rejoin her daughter.

Lady Ellen was sitting by a window in a musing attitude, but there was an angry flush on her cheek which did not escape her mother's keen scrutiny.

"Aileen!" said she in Irish, in which language they generally spoke to each other, "Aileen, my child, Florence MacCarthy wishes to pay a visit to Muckruss Abbey while here. We shall go this evening. The moon is at her full to-night, and we shall sail over after the evening meal."

"As you will, my lady mother!" said Ellen, carelessly.

"Aileen," said her mother, "how is this? I re-thought it would give you pleasure, this sail on the lake by moonlight—in such good company!" she added significantly.

"You are ever thoughtful for me, mother," the young lady replied in a softened voice. "I desire no better company than yours and O'Sullivan More's."

"Aileen! Aileen! beware!" said the Countess, solemnly and sadly. "Our last chance is lost if you turn *his* heart away. He is well affected towards you now, but his mind may change if he find you cold and careless. Aileen, my only tie on earth, think now that you have to choose between Florence MacCarthy and Nicholas Browne! You are mad, mad, *mad*, if you do not thankfully accept the deliverance that God hath placed within your reach for you, for me, for your father, *for Clan Carthy,—for the Geraldines!*" she added with stern emphasis, as she quitted the room.

After her mother's departure, Ellen sat long in the same attitude; it were hard to define the expression of her face, and so her faithful Una thought as she anxiously observed her. She was evidently debating some point in her own mind, the same angry flush on her cheek, the same cloud lowering on her brow. At length she started from her reverie:

"I will go," she said, "but not on his account. Since he is so easily put off, I will e'en shew him that I *am* otherwise disposed!" She smiled as she met Una's anxious eyes, and going up to her, patted her on the head, where she sat at work. "You must use your best skill, little Una, to deck me as becomes MacCarthy's daughter. Bring forth my

kirtle of sea-green taffety. I would look my best to-day—not for love,” she added in an undertone, “but for spite.”

And she did look her best, when, as evening approached, she appeared before her mother, ready to descend to the hall. The Countess noted with an approving smile the change in her daughter's apparel.

“How passing fair my child is!” she murmured low to herself, as they descended to the banqueting-hall, at the entrance of which they were met by MacCarthy and O’Sullivan, who conducted them to their seats on the dais. The same feeling of admiration was expressed in the eloquent glance of Florence, but the lady, proud and cold, appeared to notice it not.

With music and mirth the moments lightly sped while the meal went on. Never had Eman of the Harps called from the silver strings more joyous strains; the praises of the O’Sullivans and MacCarthys mingled in his song, and the gentles above, and the retainers below, were alike inspired by his minstrelsy. Even the Countess was less grave than usual. Lady Ellen alone refused to smile, and O’Sullivan with the privilege of an old friend, bantered the fair girl on her maidenly modesty, as he doubtless deemed it. Florence was by no means particular in his attentions, and there seemed a tacit understanding between him and the young lady, that no tie of sympathy existed between them.

When the first moon-beams came streaming into the hall, through the splayed loop-holes, the Countess and Florence rose simultaneously, and the Countess whispered to her daughter that it was time to go, if they would have the best of the moonlight. O'Sullivan, who had been pledging Mac-Finan across the table, drained his goblet hastily, and declared his willingness to join the party.

"Though I must own, Countess," he pleasantly said, "I were better pleased to go by daylight. It is a lonesome place, that same Irrelagh, now that the monks are gone, and only the dead dwelling in the old Abbey."

"No need to go in," replied the lady with a calm smile. "We may even land, and there will be enough of us in the boat to make good company."

Some of the gentlemen looked as though they would fain have joined the party, gathering its destination from O'Sullivan's words, but unasked they might not intrude themselves on such a company, and so they were fain to content themselves with toasting the ladies of Clancarthy in the Spanish wine that sparkled in huge methers on the board, as the retainers did in the less costly usquebaugh provided for their delectation.

Meanwhile our party sailed out into the lower lake, the boat guided by a skillful hand through the rocks and shoals at the head of the swift rolling Laune. Some half-a-dozen sturdy gallowglasses occupied one end of the boat, their battle-axes

gleaming in the moon-light—such a guard was, in those stormy times, not alone one of honor, but one of prudence, while the lusty arms of four stalwart kerne impelled the light craft over the waters, now bright in the moonlight, now dark in the shade.

On sped the boat, and silence seemed to have fallen like a spell on the party, enhanced, as it were, by the more than earthly beauty of the scenes through which they glided, and the hushed repose of earth and air. The boatmen began all at once to chant in chorus a low, plaintive song, to the measured cadence of which their oars kept time. Occasionally, too, was heard the shrill scream of the heron from the reedy shere, or the louder cry of the eagle from the mountains above. These sounds served but to make the general hush of nature deeper still by contrast, and lent, therefore, a new charm to the scene.

Past Rabbit Island the boat glided,—past Innisfallen and its ruined Abbey, ruined like Muckruss and Aghaboe,\* not as yet by time, but by the ruthless soldiers of Henry the Eighth, and his daughter Elizabeth,—past Ross Island with its ancient stronghold of the O'Donoghoes, past the mouth of Glengla Bay, with “Dinis’ Green Isle” seen dimly through the hazy moon-light,—it was then that O’Sullivan’s voice broke the silence.

\* Three Abbeys, for ages long in ruins, give a more mournful and solemn beauty to the magic scenes of Killarney. These are Aghaboe, on a high hill in sight of the Lower Lake, Innisfallen, on the island of that name, and Muckruss, or Irrelagh, on the peninsula of Muckruss.

"Had we but music on board," said he, "we might sail up the bay to the Eagle's Nest."

"Music need not be wanting," said Florence. "With permission of the Countess, I have brought Lady Ellen's lute; it may be that she will favor us so far as to play somewhat. I dare not ask such grace, but you, Owen, she will scarce refuse!"

"That I will answer for," said O'Sullivan, and the Countess in a low voice, told her daughter at once to accede to the request.

Lady Ellen took the lute from the hand of Florence, though it must be owned, with no gracious air, and while the boat glided up the narrow channel between

———"Dinis' green isle, and Glenna's wooded shore," played a strain of the elder time, slow and simple, such as "Killarney's wild echoes" best repeat.

The air was a sad one, and as the fairy-like echoes caught it up, repeating it in every possible way, it seemed as though the spirits of the dead were wailing on every craggy steep above, and along the shadowed waters that lay beneath, dark as the river of death. While all listened, as if entranced, Lady Ellen stopped suddenly and laid down the lute; her heart was sad that hour, she knew not why, sad and troubled, and her own mournful music was more than she could bear. Yet she could not, and would not, wake a livelier strain.

No one spoke, but Ellen felt the instrument drawn gently from her hand, and the next moment a bold.

er hand swept its chords with a strange, wild prelude that went ringing like the sound of many trumpets away amongst the rocks and mountains. Before the young lady had recovered from the first surprise, the strain was changed, and a wild, sweet Spanish air was floating on the night-breeze, and breaking, in fitful snatches, from lonely caves where the echoes dwelt.

The air was the same that for months long had been haunting Ellen MacCarthy, and its every note woke an echo of gladness in her heart. But she said not a word. The Countess praised the air and asked what it was called. Florence answered that it was a Spanish serenade air, mentioning the name at the same time.

"*You* have heard it before, Lady Ellen?" he carelessly asked, turning to the silent maiden by his side.

"To be sure she did," said O'Sullivan gleefully—"and I heard it, too, one moonlight night last harvest at Dunkerron Castle,\* when people thought I was asleep. But I suppose little Ellen forgets all about that night," he added in a humorous tone.

Lady Ellen was silent, but there was one, at least, who found her silence more eloquent than words.

"Is Lady Ellen still 'otherwise disposed?'" whispered a voice at her side.

\* Dunkerron Castle, situate within a few miles of Kenmare town, was one of the principal strongholds of O'Sullivan More. Near it was Cappanacuss, another strong castle of the same powerful chief.

The answer must have been satisfactory, for the next moment Florence took the lady's hand, and raised it to his lips. Even the shadow of the towering Eagle's Nest did not hide the action from the watchful eyes of friendship. O'Sullivan rubbed his hands, and chuckled merrily to himself, as, leaning across, he said to Ellen in a low voice—

"I told you a *Spanish minstrel* was better than Nicholas Browne. And I told you, too, to keep up your heart. Methinks I am somewhat of a prophet, Aileen dhu!"

The Countess perfectly understood what was going on, but she chose to remain a silent observer of what, nevertheless, filled her heart with joy and thankfulness.

"What has become of the music?" asked O'Sullivan, maliciously. "Hath it gone to sleep with the echoes?"

"Will you not play that air again, Florence?" whispered Lady Ellen.

Not only that air, but many others, Irish and Spanish, did Florence play, and the echoes answer, as the boat floated down the stream again towards the broad expanse of the Lower Lake. As it rounded the sharp headland at Otter's Point, and glided along under the dark woods of Muckruss toward the ancient Abbey of Irrelagh, the accomplished minstrel changed the lively strain he had last played to a wild and mournful air that thrilled every heart—it was the funeral march of the Clan Caura, whose

time-honored burying-place they were approaching.

For a brief space the boat stopped when the Abbey was in sight, solemn and mournful in the silence and decay to which the ruffian barbarism of English soldiers, doing the will of the new religion, had consigned it for evermore.

Grand and stately was the music and full of woe, and as the oarsmen rested on their oars, and the gallowglasses raised their *barrads* in honor of the noble sleepers within the ruined pile, it seemed as if the voices of the dead MacCarthys rose, hollow and plaintive, from amid the tall ancestral trees that had for ages sheltered their last repose, joining in the solemn and familiar strain.

"Ellen," said Florence MacCarthy, laying down the lute, as the boat sped on again over the bright waters of Castle Lough Bay, where a castle of the MacCarthys stood on a small island, flinging its shadows far out into the bay; "Ellen, it is there, before the ruined shrine of Irrelagh, over the ashes of our fathers, that I should wish to plight my faith to the fairest daughter of Clan Caura. Say, shall it so be?"

"It is a strange thought, Florence," replied Ellen softly, "yet I mislike not the plan. But methinks it were well, before you talk in such wise, to speak with my lady mother anent the matter."

"I leave that to you, fair lady mine," said Florence pleasantly, and he laughed low to himself.

Lady Ellen that night, on their reaching Pallice

Castle, threw herself into her mother's arms, and whispered—"Mother, I am saved. *He* has come to save me—to make me his own dear wife!"

"I know it, dear one!" said the mother, fondly kissing her child's white forehead. "I know it, and I am glad, glad and thankful."

"But my father——"

"Hist! child, hist!—let no one hear these words: *Your father knows it, too*,—he sent Florence hither. But an' it were known, he being now in England, he might spend the remnant of his days in the Tower of London, and never see Killarney's hills again."

"And the Brownes?"

"Let them e'en make the best of it," said the Countess, more sharply than was usual with her. "Had they not looked to climb so high, their fall would have been the less, and their disappointment the more pitied. Come, my Aileen, let us to our night prayer. We have much to thank our God for this happy night!"

And a happy night it was; one that was often remembered with strangely-varying emotions in the changeful years that followed. Alas! that the very brightness of the recollection, and its delicious charm, should serve to darken and embitter still more many an after hour of gloom and anxious care.

Two days after, when the moon was again shining on the desolate Abbey walls in the last hours of night, a bridal party stood before the ruined shrine of Muckruss, where the altar still stood, defaced and

broken. The light of day might not witness, in those evil days, the marriage of MacCarthy More's daughter to the son of one MacCarthy Reagh, and the son of another,—himself the lord of broad ancestral domains !

Few were the witnesses of that marriage, that in other times would have gathered together princes and chiefs, and lords, and ladies from more than one of the four Provinces of Ireland. O'Sullivan More, MacFinan, the seneschal, and another young officer of the Earl's household, who was the Lady Ellen's foster-brother, these, with the Countess and Una O'Leary, were alone present. The friar, the Earl's chaplain, a man of venerable age, who said Mass and performed the ceremony, was one of those who in the direful days of Henry VIII., were expelled from the Abbey at the sword's point. It was, truly, a solemn and picturesque scene, suggestive of many a mournful reflection.

No bard played, no *clairseach* sounded, no clansman raised his joyous cheer, when the daughter of the MacCarthys and the Geraldines wed her equally noble kinsman; no banner waved, no spear or battle-axe gleamed ; only the pale moonlight streaming through the roofless aisle, and the sickly ray of two small tapers on the altar, illumined the strange scene. Amid the ghostly shadows of the ruined fanes, in silence and in mystery, where their lordly fathers slept beneath, Lady Ellen became the wife of Florence MacCarthy.

Little did Nicholas Browne dream that morning in his house at Molahiffe, that the presumptuous hopes he had cherished, of being one day MacCarthy More's son-in-law, were forever blighted; that the fair and rich prize he had so coveted was even then snatched from his grasp.



## CHAPTER V.

SILENTLY and secretly as the marriage was performed, the news sped like wild-fire, throughout the Province, that Florence MacCarthy had wooed and won the heiress of Clan Carthy's Earl! The clans of Cork and Kerry heard it, and were glad. The Brownes heard it, and rage and mortification, and the thirst of vengeance, filled their souls. The Queen's officials heard it; Sir Thomas Norreys heard it, and sore amazed and discomfited at the clever trick Florence had played him, and dreading, moreover, the Queen's anger, he sent a posse of soldiers into Kerry with all haste, and in the chief castle of MacCarthy More, within the walls of the Pallice, were Florence MacCarthy and his young bride, the aged Countess, MacFinan, and Lady Ellen's foster-brother, arrested; even poor little Una O'Leary was duly taken into custody as "the Queen's prisoner!" Luckily for O'Sullivan he had gone home before the arrival of the troops, and succeeded in keeping himself out of the way till the storm had blown over. It was the solitary consolation of the so lately happy party that the priest, too, was saved from falling into the hands of those who literally thirsted for the blood of every minister of the ancient faith. To him capture would have been cruel and most certain death!

Florence MacCarthy, MacFinan, and Teague Merigagh, the bride's foster-brother, were conveyed to Cork, and lodged under bolt and bar; the Countess was taken to the strong fortress of Castlemaine, in Kerry, but Lady Ellen and her female attendant were placed "under proper *surveillance*" at the house of an English "merchant of the city."\* Sad and sudden ending to a season of happiness all too brief!

People, now-a-days, may ask in surprise what concern it was of Sir Thomas Norreys, or of Queen Elizabeth, that the daughter of an Irish chieftain should marry, with the consent of her nearest relatives, a young gentleman of her own race, every way suitable for her husband. Nevertheless, so much did it concern even the royal Elizabeth herself, that when she read the letter in which Norreys informed her that Florence MacCarthy, having, on false pretences, got his warrant to go into Desmond, had married his cousin "in an old broken church near by," and, it was feared, "with Mass and Popish rites,—not in such solemnity and good sort as behoved, and as order of law and her Majesty's injunction doth require"—the gentle Tudor princess burst into a fearful passion, stormed and swore, as was her wont, and vowed a terrible vengeance on all and every one who had aided in this "treasonable practice," as she and her ministers styled the marriage. And why all this fury? Simply because

\* Why the prisoners were not all lodged in Cork jail is matter of conjecture. Some historians have it that they were arrested at different times and in different places.

of the very advantages of birth and alliance which made Florence so acceptable a son-in-law to the Earl and Countess of Clancarthy. Right well would it have pleased the Queen had she heard of Lady Ellen's marriage with Nicholas Browne, the surveyor's son, or, indeed, any other "loyal English gentleman;" but, alas! for the English interest and the new religion, the case was far, far different. Florence MacCarthy, wrote Norreys and St. Leger, was "one of the best affected gentlemen of the Irishry in Munster;" he was "beloved of all his nation;" was "fervently attached to the old religion," and "much frequented the company of Spaniards, whose language he had learned." To crown the long list of the young gentleman's offences, he was connected by birth or marriage with nearly all the great families "of the Irishry;" he was the favorite nephew of MacCarthy Reagh, Lord of Carbery, the brother-in-law of O'Sullivan More, the nephew of James FitzMaurice, the arch-traitor, the first cousin of MacCarthy, Lord of Muskerry, whose mother was another sister of FitzMaurice, the nephew of Lord Roche, who had married the third of the FitzMaurice sisters, and the uncle of O'Connor Kerry, whose mother was his sister! Here was, surely, sufficient cause why he should not have been, by any manner of means, the son-in-law of the great Earl of Clancarthy. "For," wrote St. Leger and Norreys, "if this alliance be not prevented, it will breed much trouble, and cause much loss to her Majesty." All that could be done had

been done, her Majesty was informed, by the arrest of the offending parties, who had dared to "practice" a step so undutiful and so ungrateful to their sovereign liege, the Queen! The only trouble was that O'Sullivan More had not yet been apprehended, but of that there was good hope.

In the midst of her towering passion, the Queen suddenly remembered that the Earl of Clancarthy was actually in London, and him she forthwith summoned to her presence, exulting in the thought that he, at least, was in her very clutches. Both Norreys and St. Leger had stated it as the current opinion that the marriage was not accomplished without the Earl's "connivance."

Now, Donald MacCarthy More was not the man who might be expected to brave the fury of Elizabeth Tudor with any shew of composure. And yet he did; his face, prematurely old, from his disorderly life, yet still stamped with the nobility of his race, was calm and unmoved, as he stood the fire of that lightning glance before which the bravest and stoutest had often quailed.

"How now, Earl?" said the enraged lioness, "what wicked treason is this that hath been wrought of late in your country? Is it true what they tell me, that you have compassed a match for your daughter without our knowledge or consent?"

"If so be that the marriage hath taken place, mine honored liege," made answer MacCarthy, "before God, I know not of it."

"By the soul of our father!" said the Queen, with still increasing fury, "but this is too much. Would you have us believe, my Lord of Clancarthy, that this gentleman who hath proved himself so unworthy of the many favors we had bestowed upon him, went from here on such errand without your knowledge? Speak, man, and speak truly!"

A slight confusion was visible in the Earl's manner, as he replied—"Something of the matter Florence said to me, but I gave him for answer that without your Majesty's consent I would not, for all the world, allow my daughter to marry him. This I said before witness."

"How sayest thou! before witness!—before what witness?" cried the Queen in a tone of incredulity.

"Before gentlemen of as good account as any in Munster."

"Are they of loyal demeanor? well affected towards us?"

"Surely, yes!—your Majesty may have them before you, an' you will, or before your honorable Council. They are now in London."

"Write down their names!" said the Queen to her Secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham, who was present.

The witnesses were five Irish gentlemen of honor and credit, and, as it happened, of "loyal demeanor," as Walsingham certified, after referring to a list of the disaffected in Munster.

"Have them summoned before the Council!" said the Queen to Walsingham. "For you, my Lord of

Clancarthy, see that you leave not this, our city of London, without our knowledge."

"Most gracious Queen," said the Irish Earl, "if this marriage hath been practised, without my knowledge or consent, I must crave permission to recover my daughter, if so be I can, from this cunning traitor who hath deceived us all. She being still under age, the marriage may be broken, an' it please your highness."

Mightily the suggestion did please her highness, and much did it serve to remove suspicion of "connivance from the Earl.

The Queen swore a round oath that the thought was a good one, and, by way of consolation, she informed the aggrieved parent that his wife and daughter, and "all those who had been parties to the marriage," were in prison; "O'Sullivan More, the chief adviser, as it seemeth, hath alone escaped the vigilance of our faithful servants," said the Queen, somewhat appeased.

Smiling to himself at her Majesty's strange pronunciation of O'Sullivan's name, which in her mouth was O'S-owl-i-van, the Earl gravely shook his head.

"I fear me much that O'Sullivan's escape may breed trouble," said he; "natheless, with your Majesty's gracious aid, we may remedy the mischief. I cannot but blame my wife for giving in to these practices. The woman hath ever been of weak mind—" he was going to add—"like her late unhappy brother of Desmond," but he luckily remembered

that it was not advisable to remind the Queen of his own so near connection with that ill-fated Earl.

The five gentlemen "of loyal demeanor" who had, so fortunately for the Earl, been present on the occasion, duly testified before her Majesty's Privy Council that they had heard the Earl of Clancarthy positively refuse to give his daughter in marriage to Florence MacCarthy, unless he obtained the Queen's sanction to the marriage.\* What with their testimony, and the shew of displeasure made by the Earl in regard to the undutiful conduct of his wife and daughter, not to speak of Florence,—Donald MacCarthy More remained a free man in London, whilst the storm of Elizabeth's anger was venting itself on all concerned in the obnoxious marriage.

It was well for the reckless head of Clan Caura that the Queen did not see the merry twinkle of his eye, or hear his soliloquy, as he wended his way to his lodging in the Strand.

"Truly, Florence hath a long head. Ay! and a sharp wit!" said the noble father-in-law to himself, with a complacent chuckle; "now, wao but he would have thought of having me say, with witness present, that I would never give in to his marriage with Aileen, failing the Queen's consent? Ha! ha! ha! The Queen's consent! As though Mac-

\* The names of these "honorable gentlemen" were as follows: Richard Power, James Trant, Denis Falvey, Patrick Galway, and Dermot L'ynne. Their testimony was to the effect that the Earl had given *money deeds* to Florence MacCarthy in their presence, but with the express proviso that all was null in law unless the Queen gave her consent.

Carthy More must needs ask the consent of Harry Tudor's base-born daughter to marry *his* daughter to whosoever he will! Truly, Florence hath played his cards well, and between us, we have led the Brownes a merry dance! Were Florence but safe out of the cage now, I warrant he would make all go smoothly. A long head hath Florence MacDonogh, and he knows this game of state-craft as well, methinks, as old Cecil himself!"

Little cared the profligate Earl, while exulting in the successful strategy which had kept himself outside the Tower walls, that his noble and virtuous wife was then the inmate of an Irish prison, subjected to all manner of indignity and insult, and deprived of the ordinary comforts of life! Had the heart within him been one whit less hard and selfish than it was, it would have been cold and heavy at the thought that the partner of his life, the mother of his children, the daughter of a right noble race, was the prisoner of Elizabeth's heartless minions, torn from her home in her declining years for simply obeying his commands. His young daughter, too, and the husband he had himself given her! But nothing of this troubled the ignoble soul of Donald MacCarthy, with whom *self* was ever the one supreme object. So he went his way rejoicing. He, at least, had escaped Elizabeth's ire

Happily for the poor Countess, there was one to compassionate her unmerited sufferings. There was one to remember that she had once been the ad-

mired and courted Lady Honora Fitzgerald, daughter of the Earl of Desmond, and was now the Countess of Clancarthy, respected by all save her unworthy husband.

This compassionate friend was not of the Irish, nor yet of the Anglo-Irish race; he was one of the recent undertakers, and his name was Sir William Herbert; a stern, dark-faced man of purely English blood, respected by all men for his high principle and moral worth, though little loved by his brother-undertakers, for reasons to be shown hereafter.\*

Now, Sir William Herbert being a magistrate, had ample power to exercise his humane feelings; so one bright day in the early part of July he went to Castlemaine, and, without let or hindrance, took the Countess of Clancarthy and the maid who accompanied her, and merely telling the jailor that he would be answerable for the lady's appearance, conducted her, with the respect due to her rank and station, to his own Castle of the Island, some miles distant, where suitable apartments were given her, and the kind Herbert family did all that refined attention could to make the noble lady forget that she was a prisoner.

Good Sir William sat down then and penned a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham, the Queen's Secretary, which bespeaks at once his humanity and

\* Sir William was the ancestor of the present Herberts of Killarney, who still retain the honorable characteristics of their sturdy progenitor. They are good landlords, and, therefore, much beloved by their tenantry, the descendants of the very chiefs and clansmen whose lands they now possess.

a sense of justice that is truly marvellous in an English undertaker of that day in Ireland. And yet the letter contained some passages that are eminently characteristic of that age. Whilst informing the Queen's Secretary that he had taken it upon him, as an old and faithful servant of the Queen, to remove the Countess of Clancarthy from the "damp, unwholesome prison" to which she had been conveyed, he excused the step by saying that the Countess of Clancarthy, besides being "ever of very modest and good demeanor—though matched with one most disorderly and dissolute"—was "far stricken in years, and without hope of children" therefore "to be favored!" Furthermore, Sir William, in his apology, gravely informed the right worshipful secretary that it was rumored in those parts that the Earl's attempt to throw the blame of the marriage on his wife, was made with a view to have her so brought to shame and trouble that it would shorten her days, and leave him at liberty to contract a new marriage, "whereby the Queen's remainder might be imperilled."

The modern reader may not know that, in case of the Earl's death without issue male, his vast possessions were to pass over to the Queen of England; he having been induced some years before to surrender his lands to her Majesty, and accept them back as her gift, together with his Earl's patent! Hence, it was a valid excuse for Herbert's removing the Countess from her prison to his castle, that she "was far

stricken in years, and without hope of children," so that her Majesty's "Great Expectations" touching MacCarthy More's principality, were no wise "imperilled."

But to return to Florence and his young wife, whom we left imprisoned within the grim walls of the ancient City by the Lee, The captivity of the Earl's son-in-law was not so irksome as might be imagined. Whether it was that the Vice-President had given orders to make his imprisonment as light as possible, or that, in the absence of any special command on the subject, the Cork jailers took it upon themselves to give the wealthy young MacCarthy the full benefit of his ample means, it is certain that his hours were blithely spent while in their custody. His friends were allowed to visit him at will, and he was, moreover, free to entertain them, which he did with a right good will. Mirth and good cheer abounded in the spacious apartment which money had procured for him, and what he valued most of all,—as, indeed, it was the most remarkable privilege he enjoyed,—his young bride was not debarred from visiting him. It is true, Lady Ellen's visits were not made openly as those of the others; much caution was observed by the turnkeys in her going in and coming out, but this air of mystery that shrouded their interviews served but to increase the joy of meeting, and gave a still more potent charm to those swiftly-passing hours they spent together within the gloomy prison walls. Sitting

lonely in her semi-confinement, in the quaint old house of the Cork trader, where she was placed for sale keeping, on her husband's security given by bond, the young daughter of Clancarthy whiled away the tedious hours between her visits to the prison, by talking with her faithful Una over the strange events of the last few weeks. There was in the house an ancient spinnet that had belonged to some departed member of the trader's family, and as the young lady had, happily, learned its use, it served to beguile some of the weary hours. Lady Ellen was not much given to thought, nor was she of an imaginative turn; she was one of those who are fain to take what good they can out of the world and passing events, troubling themselves little, or none at all, about future contingencies. Having, by nature, fully as much of her father's common-place character,—it might be even more than of her mother's more refined and thoughtful temperament,—the young heiress seldom, if ever, thought of anything beyond the present hour, or the evil immediately threatening herself, whatever that might be. It must be something directly affecting herself that had power to gladden or sadden her young, light heart.

It is true, she felt keenly this, her first separation from her mother, and her tears flowed many a time when she thought of her sad and lonely state in the gloomy fortress of Castlemaine, far away from kith and kin, from home and friends. Even when with Florence, she sometimes gave way to despondency,

while talking of her mother, and, with the petulance of a froward child, blamed her marriage as the unlucky cause of so much mischief.

Florence smiled as he listened to these girlish complaints, well knowing that he had the power of soothing away the cares and sorrows that rested so lightly on his young wife's heart.

One day, when Lady Ellen came to visit him, he met her with a face of joy that at once attracted her attention. It was so different from his usual expression of anxious care.

"Why, how is this, Florence?" she asked, "you look as though you had received some glad tidings?"

"And truly, so I have. Heard you no news, you who live abroad in the city?" Ellen shook her head.

"Then am I better served in prison. I have heard that your lady mother hath been taken from Castlemaine prison by Sir William Herbert, on his own bail, and lodged in his Castle of the Island!"

"Now, may heaven bless him for that good deed!" said the young lady, with a glowing cheek and a moistened eye, "I forgive him all, were he fifty undertakers. But, Florence, know you this for certain?"

"That do I, my little wife!—I had it from one of mine own men who came hither yesternight with the news."

"Now, then, I am happy!" said Lady Ellen, as she threw back the hood from off her face, and laid her head on her husband's shoulder.

"Happy, Ellen! and I in jail,—yourself a captive, your mother, too, and others of our friends, all on our account!"

"Yea, happy, Florence, I said, and said truly. But tell me, how is it," she said, with a look of newly-awakened curiosity, "how is it that my father hath not been arrested, though he be in London? hath no suspicion fallen on him?"

Florence MacCarthy laughed, a low, inward laugh peculiar to himself. "Suspected he was, Ellen, and matters might have gone hard with him, too, but that provision was made beforehand for his safety. Nay, no questions, little one! such heads as this," fondly stroking her raven hair, "need not be troubled carrying men's secrets. You would be too wise, an' you knew everything!"

Lady Ellen was quite willing to be left in ignorance on that, or, indeed, any other subject. She had already learned to look up to Florence's wisdom and knowledge as something far beyond her comprehension, and it needed not this new proof of his far-reaching foresight to make her regard him with admiration in those early days of their married life. They were bright days, after all, notwithstanding their surroundings.

Nor did this escape the keen eyes of their deadly foes, the Brownes. Fierce in love and in hate, Nicholas Browne, who had really set his heart on the Earl's dark-haired daughter, and had coveted her no less than the broad domains she was to inherit,—

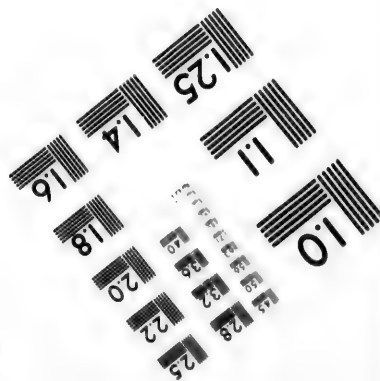
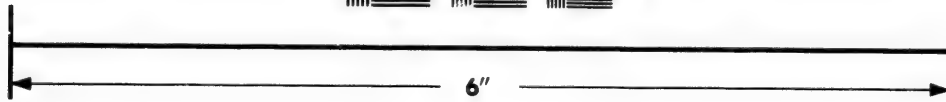
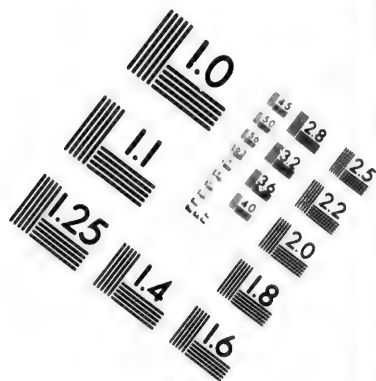
now hated with a mortal, implacable hatred, the man who had robbed him of the lady and her lands. The deserted bridegroom of Molahiffe henceforth lived but to revenge himself on the successful rival who, like the young Lochinvar of Scottish song, had borne away in triumph the prize of which he had thought himself sure, and left him to "dangle his bonnet and plume."

His first step, in the way of revenge, was to apprise O'Sullivan Beare,—whose daughter it was supposed that Florence would have married,—of what had occurred. The hot blood of the Kerry chieftain boiled with indignation at the news, and the lightning flash of his eye, and the dark frown that gathered on his brow gladdened the heart of Nicholas Browne; he knew that he had made another and a powerful enemy for Florence. The thought was balm to his heart.

The next move was made by Sir Valentine, his worthy progenitor,—with a heart full of bitterness the quondam surveyor had betaken himself to Dublin, there to hover around the Viceregal court, in expectation of some fortunate turn of affairs that might enable him and his to recover the ground they had lost by Florence MacCarthy's bold and masterly *coup de main*. The month of October brought a letter from Sir Valentine in Dublin, to Sir F. Walsingham in London, complaining that his three sons who were settled on the Earl of Clancarthy's lands were in great danger of being dispossessed, for that

all the MacCarthys were now likely to join against them, and that the horsemen heretofore allowed each undertaker by the Queen's government, were, by advice of Sir William Herbert, to be recalled, or left to be supported at the sole charge of said undertakers. This, Sir Valentine said, would be utter ruin to his three sons aforesaid, and many other loyal gentlemen who could by no means afford to pay these horsemen, and if left to their own servants would be undoubtedly set upon by the Irish lords of countries, who *unjustly* claimed the lands. To crown all the grievances of Sir Valentine and his three sons, "Florence MacCarthy remaineth in Cork with the resort of his friends and *the Earl's daughter*, with small restraint, he rather rejoiceth with banquettings than that he seemeth sorry for his contempt!" And then, to make matters still worse, Florence and his friends, he alleged, were giving out that the Queen had not forbidden the marriage, and that she would soon be brought to restore Florence to favor, and give him the right of succession to his father-in-law's vast possessions.

What effect these artfully-framed complaints had in London remains to be seen. They were strengthened and enforced, be it remembered, by the earnest remonstrances of Norreys and St. Leger, and also by those of the Queen's Bishop of Cork, all of whom painted in vivid colors the sad results that might and would follow this union of the two chief branches of the MacCarthy sept, con-



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nected, too, with several of the Geraldine families, representing to her Majesty that the only way to prevent all this mischief was to annul the marriage, and to endeavor, if possible, to cut off Florence's right of succession to the Lordship of Carbery. With so many and such powerful enemies, hard it was for Florence MacCarthy to hold his ground.



## CHAPTER VI.

ONE sad day there was mourning in Cork jail. Orders had come from England to remove Florence MacCarthy to Dublin, and the young wife of four months was called to see her husband, it may be for the last time, while the Queen's messengers waited to do their errand and convey him on board a royal vessel then lying in the harbor.

"Oh Florence ! Florence !" she cried, as she clung to him, sobbing and in tears, at the last moment, "would that I had never become your wife, when this, *this* is the penalty !—How is it that the meanest of my father's clansmen can marry whom he will, whilst you and I must needs have leave from England ?"

"Hush, darling !" whispered her more politic husband, "you forget that walls have ears in a prison ! Were you better skilled in certain matters, I would tell you more than now I do or can. Be sure, however, that the Brownes are at the bottom of all this. You are but a child in worldly wisdom," he tenderly added, "else you would have no need to ask wherefore it is that neither you nor I,—but especially you,—was free to marry, without the Queen's good leave."

Seeing a turnkey's head protruding through the half-open door, Florence said aloud, "Commend me

to your lady mother, if, perchance, it please our gracious Queen to shorten the term of her imprisonment and yours, that so you may return in peace to your father's castle of the Pallice. And so, farewell! my wife! my Ellen!—think of me as I will think of you, and be of good heart, dear one, for the Queen's goodness will soon restore us to each other."

Smothering her grief as best she could, Lady Ellen rejoined her attendant, who awaited her at the gate, and returned to her lonely room, lonelier than ever. Drearily and wearily her days now passed; no mother, no husband, no friend to cheer or comfort her drooping spirit. Una was the only one left to whom she could speak of her own affairs, for her husband had specially warned her to keep a close mouth in her intercourse with the people of the house where she lodged, so as to avoid saying anything that might be used against him, herself, or any one concerned in the marriage.

Time rolled on; day followed day, and week followed week, and still no change in Lady Ellen's condition. Her mother was still a prisoner in the Castle of the Island, and she herself was kept under a *surveillance* which, however, was not very strict, owing, probably, to the heavy security in which Florence was bound for her appearance when called on. The friends who had been arrested with the bride and groom were still in close confinement within the prison, but Lady Ellen had heard, to her great contentment, that O'Sullivan More, having given

himself up to the Vice-President, was admitted to bail, and suffered to return to his own Castle of Dunkerron.

Lady Ellen and her attendant were in the habit of walking a little way on the river's banks, enjoying the freshness of the summer eve or morn, and many a time they sat together on the edge of the low wall that ran on either side the stream, watching the sun go down, and the moon and stars shine out in the liquid ether of the evening sky. There was no such bustle then as now by the water-side in Cork, although the commerce of the city was considerable, for the population it then had. Little of the rare beauty, for which it is now so famous, then met the eye, and the people that were seen moving through the streets were as motley as the houses on either side. Both one and the other presented the various characteristics of the mixed races by whom the ancient city was then inhabited, and in both these might be observed a strange admixture of the old and new Irish with the modern English. Then, as now, the British flag flaunted proudly over

"The pleasant waters of the River Lee,"

then, as now, most of the nations of Europe were represented by their several flags in Cork waters, but there was one flag, long familiar in Irish ports, that was then no longer to be seen in any of them, the grand old flag of Spain. Many there were on Irish ground, those stormy days, who yearned for the sight

of that friendly flag again, for, truth to tell, it was then, and for long after, the one hope of the persecuted Catholics of Ireland.

But not of that was Lady Ellen thinking, as she sat with Una by the river after sundown, one evening towards the end of August, looking listlessly down the stream to the bridge and the forts that then, at either end, terminated its city course. Her thoughts were far away in the gloomy Castle of Dublin, with him, the loved and lost, to whom a few short months before she had joyfully given hand and vow.

She was startled from her sad, though not unpleasant *reverie*, by the voice of a man asking for alms. The lady started, for the voice was not that of a common beggar, and the man, when she looked at him, as he stood with hand outstretched, had not much the appearance of one to whom the mendicant's trade was familiar. His attire was that of an ordinary workman of the city, and his thick-set, burly figure, and coarse, swarthy features, gave little indication of want. Only the empty sleeve that hung by his side gave any plausible excuse for his having recourse to charity.

Lady Ellen somehow shrank from the bold, free look which the stranger fixed upon her. She motioned to Una to stand up, as she did herself, then told the beggar that she was as poor as himself, which she regretted for his sake. She was turning away in some trepidation, when the supposed beggar, following, and watching his opportunity till no one was

near, said close to her ear, so close that she started and caught Una's arm—

"I know well that Aileen MacCarthy hath no money in her purse—poor caged bird that she is! Be not afraid," he added, in a deep, hoarse whisper, "the same blood flows in your veins and mine. Little cause have I to love the daughter of Honora Fitz-James, but I wish you no ill, young daughter of MacCarthy More!"

"In the name of Heaven, who are you?"

"A friend of yours, but no friend of Florence Mac-Donogh," the man answered in the same deep, earnest whisper. "Nevertheless, I owe him a good turn for what he hath done in regard to the Brownes, and seeing you here this evening, I thought I might as well tell you that there's one Donald MacCarthy in these parts who has some forty good swords at command, ready to back man, woman, or child against that devil's bird, Nicholas Browne. Here's people coming—I must away, for this lame arm," and chuckling, he pointed significantly to where the arm that ought to have been in the empty sleeve, was drawn up under his outer garment, across his brawny chest—"this lame arm, and this English gear I have on, would serve me little if some eyes in Cork got sight of my bonny face!—Charity, good lady, for the love of God!" he whined out, in the professional drawl of the begging tribe, as footsteps were heard approaching. The passers-by were becoming fewer and fewer, for in those turbulent times, even though

"No curfew toll'd the knell of parting day,"

the fear of danger abroad sent all men early to their homes,—if, perchance, they had them,—and cleared the streets of loiterers.

“Get thee gone, thou idle varlet!” said a stern voice in English, “thy hypocritical whining shall nought avail thee here. Get thee hence, I say, or I will have thee put where such knaves ought to be.”

“Good Master Tomkins, be not so hard on a poor fellow!” said the supposed beggar, “an’ you wanted your supper yourself, you would, perchance, whine somewhat as I do. Suffer your fair daughter to give some alms to a poor fellow who hath lost an arm?”

“The lady is no daughter of mine;” said the burly Englishman, “but be she who she may, it nothing concerns you. Begone, I say, an’ you would not have me call the watch!”

“Thanks, good sir!” said the sturdy beggar, in a tone of grim mockery. “May God reward you according to your deserts!”—So saying, he turned a corner and was lost to sight.

“Mistress Ellen!” said the Englishman, who was no other than the merchant to whose safe keeping she was entrusted, “I marvel much to find you abroad in the streets so long after sundown. See that you keep more in-doors hereafter, and avoid parleying with such graceless varlets as yonder beggar, whom I hold to be no safe company! Pray thee, fair mistress, hasten thy steps; an’ thou art seen out of doors at this unseemly hour, my dame and I may be brought to account.”

For several weeks after this *rencontre*, Lady Ellen discontinued her evening walks. Master Tomkins and his dame grew easy in their minds on the score of being compromised, for their young charge appeared herself to shrink from being seen abroad, especially at "unseemly hours." She seemed, in fact, to have lost all desire for going out, and sat all day long either playing doleful airs on the ancient spinnet before mentioned, or musing silently by the window that looked on the open country beyond the walls. Even to Una she spoke little, whereat the damsel much wondered, for Lady Ellen was, by nature, neither silent nor reserved. Respect forbade Una to question her young mistress, and so she was fain to await in silence the moment when she herself would explain the change in her demeanor.

This had gone on for some weeks, when one day Lady Ellen was sent for by Mistress Tomkins, to inspect the wares which a travelling pedlar offered for sale.

"An' you wish to buy some of this good man's wares, Lady Ellen?" said the motherly hostess. "I will pay for whatsoever you may choose."

Lady Ellen declined making any purchase, casting her eyes somewhat disdainfully over the contents of the pack, which were, indeed, of the cheapest and commonest kind, little tempting to the eye of the Earl's daughter.

"Won't you help a poor man, your ladyship?" said the pedlar in very bad English; "herself has a wife and four little ones in *Carbery* beyond."

The word Carbery struck Lady Ellen's ear, as it was meant to do. The pedlar had managed to get between her and Mistress Tomkins, and when, with a start, she raised her eyes to his face, he gave a significant look, and made a sign for her to buy something. With a show of indifference she made some trifling purchase, and the merchant's wife having left the room to procure the money to pay for it, the pretended pedlar slipped a letter into the young lady's hand, saying in Irish in a low whisper:—"I'm from Carbery—I would give my life to serve *his* wife and *him*! I'll be at the Martin Gate to-morrow evening. Beware of Donald, if you meet him. I hear he had speech of you."

A sign from Ellen warned the honest Carberyman of the approach of Mistress Tomkins, and he was again bending over his wares, busily engaged in arranging them in his pack. Very fervent were his thanks and blessings in his broken English to "the good ladies," who had bought something to "help the poor man with his wife and four little children."

In a state of feverish agitation, Lady Ellen sought the privacy of her own chamber, and having secured the door so as to prevent intrusion, tore open the precious letter which her heart told her was from her husband, and eagerly glancing at the contents, her cheek grew red, then ashy pale; her head sank on her hand, and the tears trickled through her taper fingers.

"Alas!" she murmured, "I hoped for good tid-

ings, and none have I got. Sad heart, be still ! joy is yet far, far distant !"—Long she remained in that attitude of hopeless dejection, but at length she raised her head, shook back the raven locks that had fallen over her face, and drying her tears, said hal aloud,—“Even *that* may be better than *this*. Be it as it may, it is *his* will, and I will do it joyfully, come what may !”

Calling to her Una, who, from the farther end of the room, had witnessed this scene in mute surprise, she told her with a wan smile, in a low, cautious whisper, that the pedlar had proved to be a faithful follower of Florence MacCarthy, sent by him all the way from Dublin with that letter to her, and for a further purpose which she went on to tell her, lowering her voice still more as she did

• so.

“Thank God !” was Una’s fervent exclamation. “Even that is something.”

A warning gesture from her mistress sealed her lips, as a tap at the door, and the voice of Mistress Tomkins were heard together, announcing the mid-day meal. While Una went leisurely to open the door, Lady Ellen had ample time to secrete the so highly-prized letter.

Mistress Tomkins had news for Lady Ellen ; her father had returned from England, and had sent to Sir Warham St. Leger to ask if his daughter, being under age, might be restored to his keeping, on his own security.

"What said Sir Warham?" asked Lady Ellen anxiously.

"That I know not, but I have heard say that the Earl hath a mind to break your marriage for the Queen's contentment and his own. My good master deemeth it not unlikely that you will be given back to your father that so a divorce may be obtained."

What Lady Ellen said on hearing this is of small account. What she thought was: "Florence must have heard of this. Strange that, being in prison, he can yet watch over and care for his poor, lonely wife!" Very much the same conclusion she came to as her father had done in London months before, viz., that Florence MacCarthy "had a long head," and was wise beyond his years. It may be, however, that neither Lady Ellen nor her keen-witted husband fully understood the purpose that lay hidden far down in the heart of the Earl of Clancarthy, rough and reckless as he seemed. It never occurred to Lady Ellen, though her husband's more astute mind might have guessed, that, in seeking to recover his daughter from the custody of English officials, the Earl did but shew the natural anxiety of a father to have his young daughter again under the shelter of his own roof, until such time as her husband was released from prison,—that his ulterior views in regard to the divorce might be only insinuated in order to throw St. Leger and Norreys off their guard.

"Alas! alas!" sighed the young wife. "Who would be born an Earl's daughter in this poor land,

these black and sorrowful days! Oh! that my poor brother were but living, then should I be free to marry whom I would!"

"Pri' thee be not cast down, sweet lady!" quoth Mistress Tomkins, her comely face beaming with kind womanly sympathy. "When Tomkins and I came together first we had hard times for many a long day,—ay! marry had we, for he was but a serving-man in our house, and my father was a chief man in the Glovers' Guild in fair London city. My father was a hard man, and he was main angry at first, and swore he'd have Giles Tomkins shipped to the Western Indies. He took me away from him, too, but after a month or two, when he saw that I did nothing but cry all day long, he sent for Tomkins, and told him to take his wife and go his ways. He never troubled us after, and in time himself and Tomkins became the best of friends. So cheer thee up, sweet Mistress, things may e'en turn out with you and your winsome spouse as they did with Giles Tomkins and myself."

This homely attempt at consolation was not without its effect on Lady Ellen, who could not help smiling at the thought of "the chief man of the Glovers' Guild" waxing so wroth over the alliance of honest Giles Tomkins. She was amused at the good woman's evident supposition that the Earl of Clancarthy considered his new son-in-law as unworthy of that honor, as the honest glover of "fair London city" did his former serving man. She was tempted

to explain to Mistress Tomkins that her husband was fully her equal in nobility of birth, and if not her equal in wealth, so nearly so that her father was well content with her choice, which was, indeed, his own; that, in short, it was only the Queen, her Irish officials, and the undertakers generally, who objected to the match, because it endangered their reversional "rights." Inexperienced as she was, however, and by no means remarkable for precocious prudence or sagacity, the young lady repressed the desire so natural to one in her position, and wisely kept the secret, which known, might and would have seriously compromised her father, and drawn down still heavier displeasure on her husband.

The following evening, one of the loveliest of late September, Lady Ellen expressed her wish to walk abroad with Una, to which Mistress Tomkins willingly acceded, observing that she looked somewhat pale, and that a walk in the fresh air might do her good. Tears came into the young lady's eyes; words were on her lips that she might not speak, so drawing her hood over her face, and nodding kindly to the good-natured helpmate of Giles Tomkins, she left the house, followed by Una, and walked with the buoyant step of youth along the narrow streets of the old city, taking the direction of the Martin Gate. The sun had not yet reached the horizon, and his rich autumnal rays fell slant-wise over the rows of quaint old buildings on either side, penetrating only at intervals, where the houses were lower, to the

rugged pavement below, which they gilt as gorgeously as though it were a palace floor of polished marble. The greater part of the streets lay wrapt in the shade of the tall steep-roofed houses as Lady Ellen MacCarthy and her faithful attendant tripped lightly along, little heeded by the passers-by. The business of the day was over, but the streets were still alive with the citizens, taking the air with their wives, and daughters, and "sweethearts."

Down Castle street Lady Ellen and Una went, the young lady's anxious glance full often fixed on the massive walls of the King's Castle which closed the vista at the end of the street. There, she knew, was an English warder on the battlements, and an English sentinel pacing to and fro in front of the gates. But the Castle was passed, and the warder, whose attention was turned to the open country, rather than the streets of the city, and the sentry, who scarce interrupted the martial strain he was humming to look at the two hooded figures that glided past him, undistinguishable in the crowd of Cork ladies similarly attired, who were walking to and fro, engaged in animated conversation. Through the lofty arch of the Martin Gate the two figures passed, by the wide open portal of the strong Castle that defended the entrance on the outer side, and, unchallenged by warder or by sentinel, reached the open country. Little thought the whistling sentry at the Castle gate that the taller of the two light-footed damsels who tripped past him that evening at sundown, their

faces half hidden in the deep hoods then worn by women of high and low degree, was the much-talked-of heiress of the great Earl of Clancarthy, for whose apprehension, a week later, he might have some fifty marks of gold, or mayhap a grant of land that would make his fortune, and his children's after him. So in happy (but not profitable) unconsciousness he let slip the golden opportunity of founding "a new family" in Cork or Kerry, on the forfeited lands of some Irish Chieftain.

Standing in the field without, in the shade of the high town wall, Lady Ellen looked around, half frightened at her own boldness in venturing so far.

"Pray heaven that what I have done be for good!" she whispered low to Una. "An' he should fail us now, all were lost! Back it were not safe to go, for so many watchful eyes there be, that our flight may be even now discovered."

"Nay, dear lady, be not so fearful," said Una, in the same low tone; "an' the man were truly your husband's messenger, it is little likely that he will leave you in such a strait as this. If it please you, let us walk on; it were unwise to stand still so near the gate."

They walked on at random a little way in the direction of the heights, Lady Ellen becoming more and more anxious every moment; they had reached an angle of the walls, and there stopped short, fearful to venture further, when a voice behind them said in Irish—"Is the *colleen dhu* taking a bit of a walk this fine evening?"

Turning quickly, Lady Ellen beheld her friend, the pedlar, pedlar now no longer, but arrayed in the ordinary garb of a Cork townsman of the lower classes. With an admonitory gesture, the quick-witted Carbery man went on in the same careless tone, meant for the ears of the passers by :

"It isn't afraid of the red soldiers you'd be, Kathleen astore, to be strolling out here, you and Maura, by yourselves!"

"Afraid!" said Lady Ellen in the same language, taking the cue from the Carbery man, "what for would I be afraid? The red soldiers never did harm to me."

"May be it's going to see your grandmother you are up Kenmare side."

"You've a good guess; that's just where we're bound for."

"Then I'll be part of the way with you, but you cannot be back to-night."

"Not before the gates are closed. My mother said we might stay over night."

Talking thus in a careless way the three walked on, little heeded by any one they met. All at once a horseman dashed past them, followed by one or two others. Lady Ellen did not venture to raise her eyes, and the guide himself grew suddenly silent.

When the sound of the horses' feet grew faint in the distance, Bryan na Carda (for so Florence's messenger was named) burst into a loud laugh. "Does your ladyship know who that was that passed but now?"

"Nay, how should I know? I looked not from under my hood."

"That was Nicholas Browne, who would fain have been your ladyship's husband. I warrant me he is riding in hot haste to Cork to lodge a complaint against that dare-devil, Donald MacCarthy, for some new pranks he has been playing; some of his horses houghed, or his cows killed, or may be some of his Englishmen sent to the other world. Donald is a great hand at playing such tricks—especially on the Brownes, as your ladyship can't but know."

"Thank God he did not see me!" ejaculated Lady Ellen, her mind full of the threatened divorce.

"Nay, he hath given up hope of your ladyship now," said Bryan. "Heard you not that he hath married the daughter of O'Sullivan Beare?"

"What, Eveleen, whom her father would fain have Florence marry?" asked Lady Ellen eagerly.

"The same. Master Nicholas, hearing that O'Sullivan and his daughter deemed themselves slighted in that matter, offered to marry the lady himself, hoping thereby to get some back\* amongst the Irish. So the match was made, and the couple married, and now the Brownes and O'Sullivan Beare's people are pulling together against MacCarthy More and my master,—bent on doing all the harm they can."

"Strange tidings these!" said Lady Ellen, "and yet I am well pleased that Browne hath taken a wife. Since Eveleen O'Sullivan married the gentle-

\* *Back* in Irish phraseology, used in this sense, means *support*.

man for spite, I need have no pity for her. But whither are we going?" she asked, seeing that they had now lost sight of Cork, and were going farther and farther from the river, back into the country.

"To a place of safety," was Bryan's curt, but respectful answer. "I fear your ladyship is tired, but there are horses waiting for us a little farther on."

On the little party trudged, through the increasing darkness; the road became wild and lonely, and little Una keeping closer to the side of her mistress, whispered her fears that, after all, they might have fallen into evil hands.

"Hush!" said her mistress, "be not afraid. I will end well, I doubt not."

Just then, from out a clump of trees, came a voice asking, in Irish, "Is that you, Bryan na Carda?" Bryan's answer brought out from amongst the trees three Kerry ponies, and two men who had had them in charge. Lady Ellen and her shrinking attendant were placed on two of the ponies, Bryant mounted the third, and with a kindly "God speed you, Lady Ellen of Clan Caura!" from the men behind—which familiar words set poor Una's mind at ease, the little party rode on in silence, their way lit only by the stars of heaven, Bryan riding in front as guide.

"Now, then," said he aloud, "a fig for Norreys, and St. Leger, and the Brownes to boot!"

On, on they rode through the silent night, their destination a secret to the young wife of Bryan's

master, who, nevertheless, took some pleasure in thinking that she owed her newly-recovered freedom to her husband, whose loving care still watched over her.



## CHAPTER VII.

DURING his imprisonment in Cork, Florence MacCarthy had had several interviews with the Vice-President of Munster. At first, Norreys, still smarting under the humiliation of the clever trick played upon him, indignantly refused; it occurred to him, however, that by speaking with Florence he might possibly glean some information that would furnish an item for his next dispatch to London, so he changed his mind, and gave orders for "Mr. Florence MacCartie" to be admitted to his presence.

"My service to you, Sir Thomas!" said the gentleman of the MacCarthys, with a courteous bow and a bland smile.

"Service me no service!" said Norreys testily, "what would you of me?"

"Nought at the present time, Sir Thomas, saving this, that I would fain tell you how it was that matters fell out as they did after I went into Desmond with your Honor's permission."

"My permission!—a pretty use you made of it! Truly, I would sooner have cut off my right arm had I but known your traitorous design."

MacCarthy bit his lip, and a deeper glow mantled his cheek, but his voice was as calm as usual, and his features as composed, when he replied, with a smile, "Traitorous design had I none, be well assured, Sir Thomas! in going to Desmond."

"Now, by mine honor," said Norreys, vehemently, "this exceedeth all belief. What of the mortgages you talked of? What of the Earl's broken promises, and all the other complaints you lodged against him? What of the promise you said you were under to marry the daughter of O'Sullivan Beare?"

"As for the mortgages, Sir Thomas," said Florence, smiling, "I held them then, and do hold them still. That I did not make good my claims to the mortgaged lands at that time is easily accounted for. Few days had I passed in Pallice Castle when the mortgages and O'Sullivan's daughter were forgotten, and the only thing I cared to remember was that the Earl had promised his daughter to me in marriage, and that if I could win so fair a prize, I had a better right to her than Nicholas Browne."

"Knew you not that the Queen had her word to say in a matter of such moment? that the Earl himself, even though you had his consent, had no power to give his daughter and heiress in marriage without her Majesty's sanction?"

"Nay, truth to tell, I thought not of it," said MacCarthy, with a look of candor in his face that might have deceived sharper eyes than those of blunt, honest Norreys; "I need not tell a gallant knight like Sir Thomas Norreys, that wiser heads than mine have been turned ere now by bright eyes and fair faces. One moonlight night on the Lake, with the Countess and

her lovely daughter, sent wisdom to the winds. That is the plain truth, Sir Thomas!—As for the Queen's highness, how was I to know that my gracious lady, whom I had served, and my father before me, would withhold her consent to my marrying the lady of my choice?"

"But when the lady of your choice was the Earl of Clancarthy's heiress?"

"Nay, had she been the daughter of one of mine own vassals, it were all the same to me."

"But not to the Queen."

"So I find to my heavy sorrow. My chief trouble in this matter is that I have fallen under her Majesty's displeasure, whereas I dreamed not of any such result from this love-folly of mine. The Earl's anger we, all of us, dreaded, but the Queen's no one thought of. I would that Ellen had been the daughter of some gentleman of no account, then might I have wooed and wed her without giving offence to my gracious Queen!"

"Or O'Sullivan and his daughter!" said Norreys, pointedly.

"Nay, as regards them, they may be as angry as they will. The lady hath sought consolation in the arms of Nicholas Browne, and her father may e'en let his wrath cool as it heated. I never had heart or eye in his daughter, for all he would fain have made the match."

Thus ended the first interview between the Vice-President and the Earl of Clancarthy's politic son.

in-law. The impression made on the mind of Norreys was, on the whole, favorable; he began to think that, after all, Florence MacCarthy was not so much to blame; it really did seem that he had offended not so much from malice as from ignorance, and he was undoubtedly a fair-spoken, courteous gentleman. As regarded his going into Desmond, if matters were as he represented them, he was no wise to blame; he might have gone, as he said, to look after his mortgages, without any thoughts of marriage; and then he had ever been of well-assured loyalty and of dutiful demeanor towards the Queen's highness.

So much for the effect of the first conference; another and another followed, each one raising Florence in the good opinion of Sir Thomas. Without soliciting any favor for himself or others, the wily chieftain had, in his smooth, insinuating way, talked the Vice-President into the conviction that the marriage was wholly unpremeditated on his part, a pure affair of "love at first sight," and that none of the parties concerned had been aware that the act was treasonable and offensive to the Queen!

Having reached this conclusion, Sir Thomas Norreys, good man! sat him down and wrote a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham, the Queen's Chief Secretary, in behalf of Florence MacCarthy! In this remarkable document, the so lately exasperated official recommends "Mr. Florence MacCartie" to "his honor's good favor," "as well by reason of the good

demeanor and carriage of himself," as also that several times since his confinement, having conferences with him, he "found him very penitent for his fault so offensive to her Majesty, protesting that the ignorance of her highness' pleasure, and no ill-meaning in himself was the cause of his error."\*

Before this letter reached Walsingham, Florence MacCarthy had been removed to Dublin. There some anxious, tedious weeks passed over his head. Separated from the young wife who, a few short months before, he had wedded in the mysterious and romantic solitude of the old abbey of the MacCarthys, by the Lake shore; with the love of a Celtic heart burning within him in its first fervor, and the thought of his fair and youthful bride, torn from her mother's side, exposed to dangers, and trials, and humiliations, from none of which he could shield her,—this was, indeed, misery,—this alone would have made imprisonment intolerable to most men of his race. But, however much Florence MacCarthy might have loved the fair lady he had wooed and won, there was another passion that divided with love the empire of his heart, and filled his mind with dreams and hopes in which love had no share. Ambition, perhaps, even more than love, filled his heart, and guided all his movements. Religion was not forgotten in his aspirations, but it did not occupy that first place in his heart and hopes which it did in those of other

\* State Papers, as quoted in the "Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy More," by Daniel MacCarthy.—p. 48.

Irish chieftains of his day,—he well loved the ancient faith, and much desired its exaltation, but it was not the guiding star of his thoughts and plans.

For several days he had been in a state of even unusual anxiety. Calm and self-possessed as he always was, he could with difficulty maintain his composure when in the presence of any of the officials who kept watch and ward over him. His imprisonment, owing to the favorable impression he had made on Norreys, was latterly little more than nominal, and, learning that Sir Thomas had written to London on his behalf, he had even begun to hope for his liberation.

One rich, autumnal day, when the mellow sun was shining through the bars of MacCarthy's prison, and the sky was calm and blue, and the winds were asleep in their ocean cradle, word was brought to Florence that he was to be removed to the Tower of London without delay.

For a moment the ruddy cheek of youth grew pale, and the lamp of hope burned dimly within Florence's heart ; it was but a moment, and he was himself again,—the warm glow mantled on his cheek, and his dark eyes gleamed with unwonted light, while low he murmured to himself—"Thank God ! Bryan has succeeded." He did not ask for any explanation of the new mandate, but he was not long left in doubt on the subject.

Previous to his departure from Dublin he was brought before the Lord Deputy and the Council,

and there questioned on the flight of the Lady Ellen MacCarthy, his wife, from Cork.

His surprise was great, or so it seemed ; but it was not so great as that of the grave functionaries before whom he stood, when he said, in a doleful tone, and with all appearance of sincerity—"The silly damsel will be my ruin. She knew full well that I was bound under a heavy penalty for her appearance on demand before the Vice-President ! Your lordships may send me to the Tower, or where you will, I am a ruined man. Four hundred pounds I cannot pay, though I were sold horse and foot ! Woe is me that mine own wife should be my undoing !"

"It is commonly reported," said the Lord Deputy sternly, "that this thing hath not been done without your knowledge. An' it be so, you will have cause to rue it."

"I have cause enough to rue what hath been done," said Florence, dejectedly ; "but for this ill-advised step of my wife's, I had, doubtless, been a free man before long, as Sir Thomas gave me some reason to hope."

There was some show of reason in this plausible remark, as the lords could not but see, so after a whispered consultation among themselves, during which MacCarthy stood before them with a look of well-feigned anxiety on his handsome features,—they came to the sage conclusion that nothing could be drawn from him, and that further examination must be left to the English Privy Council, or the Queen

herself. Intently engaged in their discussion of the matter, they paid no attention to the prisoner's looks, otherwise they might, possibly, have arrived at another conclusion, to the effect that the "gentleman of the MacCarthys" was amusing himself at their expense. It wholly escaped their notice that the keenest eyes in Ireland were taking ironical note of their grave deliberations, and that the face which met their eyes when they turned them on it, in such doleful, troubled guise, wore a look of mingled drolery and exultation when their eyes were turned away. They little knew Florence MacCarthy. In fact they set him down as a man of weak intellect, from whom little danger was to be apprehended, son-in-law as he was of the Earl of Clancarthy.

A few days more—just as many as the voyage from Ireland to England then took—and Florence MacCarthy was an inmate of the Tower of London. With all his hopes of a speedy deliverance—all his strong self-reliance, his heart sank within him as he passed under the gloomy arch of that dread abode, where blighted hope, disappointed ambition, humbled pride, and bleeding hearts, marked, with tears and sighs the weary hours that lay between them and the hangman's rope, or the headsman's axe. How could Florence MacCarthy fail to feel the blighting chill of the dreary place when he thought how many of his kindred had pined years of their lives away in the depths of that fortress-prison,—how many of them had gone thence but to

the place of execution? With the blood of the Geraldines, as well as of the MacCarthys, coursing through his veins, he could not forget that his maternal ancestors had been oftener tenants of the Tower than, perhaps, any other lords of the old or new Irish. He knew full well that even then one of the Geraldines was before him in the Tower, viz., Lord James Fitzgerald, the only son of the great rebel, Gerald, Earl of Desmond, sent by his mother as a hostage when her heroic husband was in his sorest strait, in the hope of saving his life, and the remnant of his broken fortunes. Alas for the cruel disappointment!

So Florence McCarthy was duly consigned to the loving care of Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, and his name was formally added to the list of State prisoners.

Weeks and weeks passed away; the glories of autumn had faded from the earth, and icy winter reigned, yet still the young husband of Lady Ellen McCarthy, the noble bridegroom of Muckruss, lay in "durance vile," his days spent in the dull monotony of prison life, his nights cheered by dreams of the loved one far away, hoping every day to be released, yet every day disappointed. So the dismal wintry hours dragged their slow length along, varied only by the half-hour's walk everyday in the courtyard of the Tower, under the *surveillance* of certain officials.

Here the prisoners had the melancholy satisfaction of meeting once a day, and although their conversa-

tion was necessarily restricted to the most ordinary and common-place topics, it was still something to enjoy human discourse for ever so brief a space and under how many restrictions soever. For several days, nay, for some weeks after his arrival, Florence had looked in vain, day by day, for the appearance of his cousin, and in answer to his inquiries, he was told that Lord James Fitzgerald was sick. "Sick!" repeated Florence to himself, "sick in this gloomy prison, far away from his mother and from all his kindred!—Poor youth!—how sad a fate is thine!"

At length the cousins met, and Florence looked with wonder and with pity on the thin, attenuated form and sunken cheeks and lack-lustre eyes of the tall, pale young man who had grown up from childhood to manhood a sickly household plant within the Tower walls. Clad in a tight-fitting doublet of black velvet, with silken hose of the same sable hue,\* the lank figure and pallid countenance of the young man were all too plainly discernible. It was hard, indeed, to trace in his wan features the bold lineaments of his martial race, or to recognize in him the son of that stout Earl Gerald, who had for eight years upheld the cause of faith and country against the whole vast power of Elizabeth.

\* It is both sad and curious to read, amongst the State Papers of England, the long lists of charges, periodically returned by the Lieutenant of the Tower in which such items are seen year after year as "a black velvet doublet," or "so many pairs of silken hose," and alas! very often, "physic" for "the Earl of Desmond's son."

With a quivering voice Florence accosted this mournful representative of the princely palatines of Southern Ireland. "God save you, Lord James; I am well pleased to see you abroad! I have inquired after your health many times, and received at times but poor accounts thereof."

"Truly, I have suffered much of late," said the young Geraldine, "but I thank God I am somewhat better now. You are the Mr. Florence McCarthy of whose arrival I was told some weeks since?"

"The same, and your loving cousin to command, —the son of Margaret Fitz Maurice, your near kinswoman—"

"And of Donogh MacCarthy Reagh;—I am proud to own our kindred. Were the place other than it is, I would bid you welcome, but you will admit that it were small kindness to welcome you here!" and the young man glanced around with a visible shudder.

It was not the place for confidential discourse, but still, as the cousins walked together up and down the courtyard, they found opportunities of exchanging a few words now and then on their own immediate affairs, such as, even if they were overheard, could damage neither.

"I hear your marriage with the Lord Clancarthy's daughter is the cause of your being here," said Lord James. "Pity it is that you asked not the Queen's consent."

Florence did not venture to tell his cousin that

had he done so, it would have been an offence almost as great as the marriage itself, which could then never have taken place, as he knew full well. He merely said aloud that had he but thought the marriage would have caused Her Highness' displeasure, there would have been no need to ask her gracious consent, thereby insinuating that the marriage would not have been thought of.

"Were it not that my wife," said Florence, "being young and of light mind, hath unlawfully and unwisely withdrawn herself from the charge of Her Majesty's servants in Cork, and betaken herself to parts unknown, I would scarce have been sent hither, as Sir Thomas Norreys was well disposed towards me, and had written to the Queen's Highness on my behalf. I have hopes, nevertheless, of being released ere long, for I hear the Queen's anger towards me is somewhat cooled of late."

The young Geraldine shook his head. He knew from his own sad experience how precarious were the chances of being "released" when once the Tower-gates closed on any one, especially of their race and country. He sighed to think how many a time hope deferred had made *his* heart sick, until now he had come to hope no more. Indeed all the powers of his mind and all the feelings of his heart were dulled and blunted; separated since earliest childhood from his mother and sisters, brought up in the Tower amongst cold strangers, trained and educated by professors of the new religion appointed by the

Queen herself, taught to regard the old faith with abhorrence, and his father's memory as an heir-loom of shame, what could be expected from the young son of Desmond but the poor blighted thing he was, a withered, sapless branch of the noblest Norman tree planted in the soil of Ireland. A strange and sad fate was his, that poor young prisoner in the Tower; prisoner for no fault of his, but given as a hostage in an evil hour, and for his father's sins of patriotism and fidelity to his faith, kept a life-long prisoner; he, the heir of one of Ireland's proudest names, the lord of a principality.

It was a startling discovery for Florence when, in one of their earliest interviews, he found that his young cousin had no community of faith or feeling with him; that he was dead to his country, and dead to the faith for which his father, and his uncles, and so many of his kindred, had laid down their lives, and suffered every imaginable evil. Even for the mother that bore him, or the sisters who had been his companions in childhood, the unfortunate young man cared but little, as Florence perceived with amazement, and at first with disgust. The latter feeling, however, soon gave place to pity, when his keen and reflective mind penetrated the truth, that all feeling had been frozen out of that young, lonely heart, and that mind and body were alike enfeebled by the strange, unnatural life the young Geraldine had led from his infant years. Nor could his kinsman make any attempt to arouse him from this

mournful apathy; the subjects on which he would necessarily have had to speak were precisely those that would have been most dangerous to both, if their conversation were overheard. Indeed, he had but few opportunities afterwards of speaking to him, for, whether by accident or design, it so happened that the cousins, if seen walking together, were sure to be joined by some third person.

But be this as it might, Florence had soon matters of more immediate interest to occupy his thoughts. Towards the end of March he was brought before the Privy Council for examination, much to his own satisfaction. He had been eagerly looking forward to this summons, supposing that only the opportunity was wanting to enable him to justify himself before the Lords, some of whom were his very good friends.

It was with more of hope than fear, therefore, that he found himself, that wild March day, in the august presence of her Majesty's Privy Council. He looked around the circle in hopes that some of his former court acquaintances would give some sign of recognition; but he looked in vain—every face was as hard and cold as stone. This might be only the official aspect put on for effect, but in spite of himself he felt depressed and uneasy. His habitual self-control fortunately enabled him to conceal the strange, and to himself, inexplicable fear that had come upon him. He stood before the assembled lords, to all outward appearance, calm and cold as

themselves. "Let them e'en make the worst of it," he thought, "it is but marriage after all: they cannot make it a state offence. Ellen was not even the Queen's ward!"

The first question put to him, in a tone of portentous gravity, chilled his heart and blanched his cheek. Had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet he could not be more astonished:—

"What acquaintance have you had of SIR WILLIAM STANLEY? How long have you known him?"

It required all Florence's powers of dissimulation to enable him to answer with tolerable composure. "I knew Sir William Stanley when he was Sheriff of the County of Cork."

"What letters," he was next asked "have you written to Sir William Stanley, or received from him, and by whom were the same conveyed? also what messages have passed between you since your first acquaintance?"

To this Florence replied that he had never had any dealings with the said Sir William Stanley since he had left her Majesty's service.

"What message did you send to Stanley, or to any other in foreign parts, by William Hurley, and what was the cause of Hurley's going beyond seas?"

Again Florence's cheek grew pale, but he answered firmly—"I have never heard of Hurley since his departure from this realm."

"What letters or messages have passed between

one Jacques Franceschi, formerly Stanley's Lieutenant, and one Wayman, his Ensign; and did you not speak with the said Wayman before his departure out of Ireland?"

After a short pause, as if of recollection, Florence replied—"I received a message from said Jacques by Wayman, requiring of me to pay £20 due to one Mr. Marbury, a servant of the Lord Chancellor's."

"Do you know one Edward Bermingham, who hath been living some time here in England?" To this Florence replied in the negative.

"Did you know of any messages or letters sent by said Bermingham to Sir William Stanley, or any other beyond 'seas?" The answer was again, "No."

"Did you not know one Donogh O'Connor, an Irishman and an artificer, dwelling in London, and was not the same O'Connor sent with Bermingham on some special matter to the Duke of Parma?"

"What letters or messages have passed between you and certain Irish Bishops and others of that nation remaining in Spain within the space of two years?"

To all these questions Florence still replied in the negative.

"Did you not know one Allen Martin, of Galway? and were you not privy to certain letters and messages of his sent to the Duke of Parma?"

Florence admitted that he knew Allen Martin, a student in one of the Inns of Court in London.

but he did not know, he said, of his having any dealings with the Duke of Parma.\*

So ended the examination from which Florence had hoped so much. Not a word had been said of his marriage, but he knew and felt that things had taken a far more serious turn, and that some enemy had been willfully at work to effect his ruin.

In order that the reader may understand the position in which Florence then found himself, we must explain in brief who Sir William Stanley was.

A year or two before, and no officer in Elizabeth's service was more trusted, or more honored than he. In Ireland, he had served with high distinction all through the late Geraldine rebellion, and had won the good opinion, even of "the Irish enemy," by his gallant bearing and his humane and honorable conduct, as compared with the other English Generals of that day. During that time he and Florence, serving together, had become friends. At the end of the Desmond war he had been sent to serve in the Low Countries under the Earl of Leicester, having under his command a battalion of Irish soldiers recruited by himself. There he had again covered himself with glory, and was made Governor of an important town he had captured, Deventer on the Isel. This town he had, to the amazement of friend and foe, given up to the enemy—the hated Spaniard, without

\* The account of this curious examination is taken almost *verbatim* from Daniel McCarthy's admirable "Life and Letters of Florence McCarthy," already quoted.

any known reason! The news of this treason had electrified the whole English realm and made Elizabeth foam with rage.

Now after the lapse of nigh two years, Florence McCarthy found himself charged with complicity in Stanley's mysterious crime. No wonder it was, that his heart sank within him.



## CHAPTER VIII.

THE Earl of Clancarthy had returned to his country, and his lady-wife had somehow obtained permission to return to her home, and what domestic felicity she could enjoy with her dissolute and heartless husband. Their daughter was gone, none knew whither, her husband was a prisoner in the Tower of London; so affairs stood in the late summer of 1590, two years after the marriage of Lady Ellen. Very lonely was the life of the noble daughter of the Geraldines in her husband's castle, now that she was deprived of her only companion. It is true, Lady Ellen was not, in all respects, what her mother could have desired; with all her beauty and grace, her mind was of no very high order, she had more of her father than her mother in her light, and rather frivolous nature, yet still the absence of her only child was keenly felt by the deserted wife of the profligate Earl. The warmest feelings of her heart were buried in the foreign grave of her son, the young Baron of Valentia, who had shewn himself, during the years of childhood, more of a Geraldine than a MacCarthy,—a born rebel against British tyranny, generous to a fault, prompt to love, and as prompt to hate. But the brave boy was gone, his young life “nipped i’ the bud,” and, be Ellen’s faults of mind or heart what they might, she was

her mother's all on earth, and her heart was torn with anxiety as to her fate. In silence and in solitude she pined away, the snow of premature age day by day settling down on her once auburn tresses, stealing their beauty away, and telling the mournful tale of a blighted life, a heart breaking with silent sorrow. The brief interval of joy and peace which the visit of Florence MacCarthy and her daughter's marriage had brought, was but as the meteor flash that illumines for a moment the moonless sky of midnight, and the flow of Lady Clancarthy's sad life was as dark and cheerless as before. Happily for her, she had early learned to bow her head in submission to the Divine will; her spirit, chastened by life-long sorrow, had come to bear all things meekly, and could she but have learned that her daughter was in a place of safety, all the rest she was content to bear, then as before.

Fortunately, this state of suspense did not last long. The Countess, with one of her attendants, was one day walking by the river side, a short distance from the Castle, when she was startled by the sound of an arrow whizzing through the air, and striking a rock a few paces in advance of where she had stopped a moment to gaze on the beauty of earth and sky. The damsel who accompanied her would have fled precipitately, but the Countess commanded her to remain. "Be not afraid," she said, "no harm is meant us. I would see yonder arrow!" pointing to where it lay. Fearful as she was of an-

other coming with surer aim from the same quiver, the damsel was still unwilling to disobey a mistress whom all her dependents loved. While she stood a moment hesitating, the Countess, muttering to herself the old saying, "second thoughts are best," went forward quickly and took up the arrow. Her keen eye had detected a paper protruding from under the feathery dart; this she managed to secrete, then handing the arrow to her trembling attendant, she told her, with a faint smile, "Methought it had been sent with a love-message for my fair Maureen, an' it were so, there is no trace of it now; mayhap you will find it somewhere hereabouts."

"Nay, madam," said Maureen, somewhat reassured, but still declining to take the arrow in her hand, "nay, madam, school-craft hath little to do with the love-messages of such as we."

It is needless to say that the Countess lost no time in returning home. Having reached her own apartments, she dismissed her attendant, and opening the precious missive, found therein a few words in the familiar hand of her daughter—

"I am well, and in safety. More I say not now."

There was no signature, but the mother's heart needed none. Heaven had sent relief to her troubled mind, and her fears for her child's safety being thus happily dispelled, she calmly resigned herself to bear the troubles and trials of her daily life.

Eighteen months had passed since Lady Ellen's marriage, fifteen of which her young husband had

spent in the Tower, when Florence one day took up his pen and indited a letter to Burleigh, Lord High Treasurer of England. Considering the cause of his imprisonment, the letter was a bold one. In it the politic "gentleman of the MacCarthys" all but acknowledged that he had himself been instrumental in effecting his wife's escape, and slyly boasted that she had been so carefully concealed that "few men knew what was become of her." He complained that her father was still seeking to find out the place of her concealment, with intent to dispose of her according to his own pleasure, and besought Lord Burleigh to send letters to the Vice-President of Munster, instructing that functionary to prevent the Earl from molesting his daughter on her re-appearance, and further to permit the lady to live in her husband's house, or with his friends, in such wise as became her rank.

This clever and ingeniously-constructed epistle was, strange to say, graciously received, and the desired instructions actually sent to the Vice-President. Scarce twenty-four hours had elapsed after the announcement was made to Florence that Lord Burleigh had acceded to his request, when the gate of his prison opening, gave admission to Lady Ellen, with Una O'Leary, and the faithful Carbery man, Bryan na Carda! Again, after so many dreary months of separation, Florence MacCarthy clasped to his heart the young wife to whom, as to himself, their union had brought but sorrow and unrest. A

marvellously quick passage must the lady have had from Ireland, and so Florence told her with that low, quiet laugh that was peculiar to himself.

"But how is it, Florence," asked Lady Ellen, "that you have obtained permission for me to come hither?"

"I have obtained permission for more than that," he replied exultingly, "you are now at liberty, sweetheart, to appear abroad at will. There be letters of Lord Burleigh's on their way to Ireland, commanding Norreys to see that my little wife be no further molested by her father or any other person, and that she be allowed to live in my house. What say you now, fair Aileen?"

"I say," she smilingly replied, "that I begin to think you can work magic."

"That can I, Ellen! and I will teach you to work it, too!"

"What mean you, Florence?"

Drawing her to him, he whispered some words that made her start and turn pale.

"Oh! Florence, I cannot—"

"You can and shall—for my sake, for your own sake, an' you love me."

"For your sake I would do much," she said, her dark eyes filling with tears, "but *that*—oh! Florence, bethink you of my youth—"

"And bethink *you*, sweet wife, what the consequence must be, an' you do it not."

A pause ensued; Lady Ellen stood with downcast

eyes, silent and thoughtful, the color on her cheek coming and going like clouds over the April sky; Florence watching her the while with a smile of conscious power. At length she raised her eyes to his, and said, while her voice trembled with emotion—

“Florence, even that will I do for you :

“Thanks, Ellen ! I knew you would not fail me !” said Florence, with genuine feeling. “You must leave me now,” he whispered, drawing her for a moment to his bosom ; “remain at Mistress Butler’s till we see what fate hath in store for us.”

Two days more and the Lady Ellen McCarthy was bowing before the throne of the red-haired, fiery-eyed Queen of England ; Lord Burleigh himself ushered her into the royal presence, and in a low voice told the Queen who she was.

“In sooth, a comely damsel !” said Elizabeth, fixing her bold eyes on the face of the young Irish lady where she knelt in her timid grace before her. “So this is my lord Clancarthy’s daughter, of whom we are tired hearing. God’s life ! damsel, you are overbold to appear before us, after your lewd practices. How came you to withdraw yourself from the custody of our servants in Cork ?”

“May it please your gracious Majesty,” said Lady Ellen, in a voice scarcely audible, her face covered with blushes, “I heard that my father was like to have me back, and meant to get a divorce—”

“Ay, marry,” interrupted Elizabeth with a coarse

laugh, "you liked not the divorce! An' you had had more of your bridegroom's company, you might like it better. But now we bethink us, how did you escape from Cork, and whither did you betake yourself?"

"An' it please your Highness," said Lady Ellen in sore distress, "I would fain be excused from answering those questions."

The fiery eyes began to flash. "God's death young lady, answer!"

With a faltering voice Lady Ellen spoke, not daring to raise her eyes—"A man from my husband's country met us—that is, my waiting-maid and I—outside the gates—and—and—"

"And what? Speak out, lass, speak out!"

"And conducted us to the house of my husband's foster-brother, near Kilbrittan."

"Kilbrittan! one of MacCarthy Reagh's castles!—and her husband's foster-brother! You hear?" turning to Burleigh, who bowed assent. "And so, young lady, your husband's foster-brother, doubtless, by your husband's contrivance, kept you all this time concealed near Kilbrittan Castle! God's life, damsel, is it so?"

"I was there but a short time, your Highness," faltered out the young lady.

"Where, then, have you been?" The stern voice of the royal speaker made the young heart in Clan-carthy's daughter sink within her; she knew, however, that there was nothing for it but to answer the question truly, be the consequence what it might.

"Here in London—lodged not far from the Tower—so that I could see my husband's prison, though I could not see himself."

Blushing at her own boldness in saying so much, and fearing a sudden outburst of anger from the Queen, Lady Ellen bowed her head lower than before.

Great was her surprise, and still greater her sense of relief, when she heard the Queen say with her shrill, coarse laugh: "By the soul of our father King Henry, but this is a good joke! Heard you ever the like, lords and ladies? There was all Munster, ay! marry, and all London to boot, wondering what had become of this young lady, and here she was snugly nesting at our very door. Ho! ho! ho!—a keen-witted knave is this Florence MacCarthy!" Then turning to Lady Ellen, she said, with mock gravity—"Wherefore, we pray thee, fair mistress MacCarthy, hath it pleased thee to visit our court at this present?"

"My gracious Queen," said Lady Ellen, harassed and bewildered, falling on her knees as she spoke, "I come to petition your Grace on behalf of my husband. He hath ever been a most loyal subject, your Highness, and his only desire is to live in peace in his own country on the lands he hath inherited from his father, the late Sir Donogh MacCarthy, who was likewise your Grace's bounded servitor."

"Marry, young lady!" said the Queen, in her abrupt way, "there be some who say that your hus-

band is not at heart so well affected towards us as his father was. Natheless, young lady of Clancarthy, it hath been represented to us that your husband, in the matter of the marriage, offended unwittingly, and knowing that he hath served against our enemies, we will take note of his case. Pending the decision, Lady Ellen McCarthy, you can visit your husband when you will, and we shall be glad to see you at our court, if so be you can come hither with some lady of good estate."

Thus graciously dismissed, the young Irish lady retired from the presence, accompanied to the door of the throne-room by one of the lords in waiting. Many a plumed and belted earl of that brilliant court, envying the lot of the imprisoned chief of Carbery, would gladly have paid his *devoirs* to the young and lovely daughter of the proud Earl of Clancarthy; but Elizabeth's jealous hatred of youth and beauty was too well known to permit any such expression of sympathy or admiration for the too charming wife of Florence McCarthy. Even the grave and stern face of Burleigh smiled for a moment when the trusted friend of Elizabeth met the young lady's eye as she bowed herself out of the royal presence.

On rejoining outside her faithful attendants, Bryan and Una, Lady Ellen, girl like, told the latter in a whisper that she had made the Queen laugh, and that she did not find her half as hard or as cruel as she expected.

"The she-wolf!" said Bryan to Una, as they walked

together behind their mistress. "I'd sooner trust an Irish life to the fiercest blood-hound that ever crossed Slieve Logher. Peace or rest will I never know till my master is safe out of her hands."

Something similar might have been the thought that darkened the broad white brow of Florence McCarthy when he listened to his wife's account of her interview, brightened by the ardent fancy and the so easily awakened hopes of youth. He could not find in his heart to tell her how little faith he had in the promise of Elizabeth to "take note of his case." Something had been gained, too,—his wife was invited to appear at court—that would give her opportunities of interceding for his release, and the very fact of her being so invited proved that the Queen's anger was on the wane, dying, if not dead. Then he could see Ellen every day without any risk to her or himself. On the whole, his prospects were improving, and calmly trusting the future to Providence, he applied himself with renewed ardor to the study of ancient Irish history, which formed the chief pleasure of his solitary hours.

A learned man was Florence McCarthy; few men of his day had a more profound and intimate knowledge of the literature of the Gael; the bardic records of the earlier times, and the genealogies of the great families were all familiar to him, and the dreams he dreamed while pondering over the eventful story of his own race were, perhaps, the inspiration of his strange life. But it was not only in the

Irish language and its literature that Florence MacCarthy pursued his studies. English and Spanish were scarce less familiar to him,\* and Latin was as his mother tongue.

During his frequent visits to the Court of Queen Elizabeth, he had made the acquaintance of the most celebrated Englishmen of that day, by reason of his literary tastes, and had even made friends amongst the statesmen who surrounded the throne of Elizabeth. These friendships, not publicly acknowledged, indeed, after his imprisonment, but still existing to some extent, Florence turned, at times, to good account in ways that often puzzled and discomfited his enemies.

Such being Florence MacCarthy, it is easy to imagine that his capacious and self-sustaining mind found ample employment for itself even in the dull monotony of prison life. Many a plan was formed, many a dream of power—of freedom for himself, his country, and his religion—passed in turn through that busy, restless brain, while Florence sat gloomily in his tower-chamber, his eyes fixed on vacancy.

In the midst of his lofty day dreams, Florence MacCarthy bore well in mind that his broad paternal domains were being scrambled for by the undertakers; even the son-in-law of the English Attorney-General had appropriated to himself some thousands

\* The numerous letters of Florence MacCarthy preserved amongst the English State Papers are fully equal in style to those of any of the English statesmen of that day. He appears, indeed, to have mastered the language in all its idioms and intricacies.

of acres of the fertile lands of Carbery. This had been going on ever since the first news of their owner's imprisonment in London had reached Ireland; and Florence knew it well, for he managed to be made acquainted, even in the Tower, with everything that concerned his affairs. Until lately, however, he thought it unwise to enter any protest, and was fain to wait till the Queen's stormy anger had subsided. That time, he judged, had now come. The Queen had promised to consider his case; he would, therefore, make a bold venture, relying on the good offices before mentioned of friends in high places.

So he took up his pen and indited a petition to the Queen that she would graciously cause his property to be protected for as long a time as it pleased her Majesty to keep him in prison. More he did not ask, but much more was granted.

Great was the astonishment of the Lords Justices in Dublin when they received a written order from the Queen's Privy Council, that Florence MacCarthy's rights were to be respected during his imprisonment; that his "servants, officers, and tenants," were to continue in peaceable possession of all their holdings; "also," went on the royal order, "that such sureties as have been committed to prison, or otherwise injured by distresses on their goods for default of the presence of such of the suppliant's servants as could not, by reason of their attendance upon the Lady Ellen MacCarthy, his wife, repair into that realm, according to their bonds, may be re-

leased and set at liberty, and their goods restored unto them." This was much, but there was still more. It was further commanded that "Daniel Roche, Alonzo O'Brien, and Edmund Slabagh, or any of the servants of the said Florence MacCarthy, may be permitted, at all times, to repair into that province, or any other part of that realm, and to return hither again, behaving themselves as dutiful subjects with such commodities and other necessary things as they shall transport for the use and relief of their said master, whereof, praying you to have such convenient regard that there may be no further occasion of complaint by them unto us in this business.\*

Lady Ellen could scarcely believe the evidence of her senses when Florence showed her, on her next visit, the copy of this remarkable document. With a smile of quiet exultation her husband watched her as she read, amused at the wonder and amazement her face expressed as clause after clause met her eye. When she reached the end, she looked up bewildered—

"Florence! am I awake—or do I but dream?"

"We are all but dreamers in this world, mine own Aileen! but you are as wide awake now as you ever will be."

"And is this order truly from the Queen?"

"Of a surety it is, and the same is even now on the way to Ireland. I wot me well the Lords Jus-

\* See Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy More, p. 77.

tices, and Sir John Popham, and Master Rogers his hopeful son-in-law, and all the rest of the robbers that have *undertaken* my lands, will doubt, as my little wife does, whether they be waking or sleeping when they come to read it."

"But I would fain know," said Lady Ellen, "who hath won such grace for you."

"Mine own self," said Florence, very calmly; "my poor petition, presented by my Lord Burleigh, hath wrought this change. Caged bird though I be, Ellen, you see I can do somewhat towards holding mine own. By this move we have gained much; now for another move, that may, perchance, checkmate some of mine enemies!"

"And what is that?"

"A little matter I have in hand, which I must needs keep secret even from you, sweet wife, until such time as the result be known. I would not trouble your little head with my plans and projects. It is meet that one so fair and young should not be burdened with care. So, sit you down, mine own Aileen, and I will play you one of those old-world airs you used to love."

"Play!" said Lady Ellen, in surprise; "surely you jest, Florence. Alas! what instrument have you in this dreary place?" and she looked round with a visible shudder.

"This have I," replied Florence, with a cheerful smile, as he drew forth from under his cloak, which hung on a pin over his bed, a lute of quaint but

costly workmanship. "I have to thank the Lady Ormond for this," said he, smiling at his wife's look of surprise, and anticipating her question. "When I was free here in London, I much frequented my Lord of Ormond's house, and the Countess was pleased to take some pleasure in my poor performance on the lute and the guitar. Mindful of my having some little skill in music, she hath sent me this for your entertainment and mine own."

"May Heaven requite her goodness!" said Lady Ellen, with fervor. "Much kindness hath she shown us both! Methinks I owe to her ladyship the favor I have found at court. But, Florence, my time is short. Play, then, before I go, what you know I best love to hear."

The young man, smiling sadly, ran his hand over the cords in a slow and plaintive prelude; then commenced at once the beautiful air that had so charmed Lady Ellen in happier days. As the young wife sat and listened, her arm resting on her husband's knee, the spell of the music fell on her troubled heart like rain on the parched earth. The present faded from her sight,—the dreary prison-walls were no longer seen; she and her beloved were again sailing over the moonlight waters of Killarney,—her mother was there, and O'Sullivan,—the lovely scenes of her childhood were around, the freshness of hope was springing up in her heart, and all within and without was again bright and smiling. But this could not last—the music ceased, and with it faded the vision of

delight. The dread reality was more than Lady Ellen could bear. Covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

"Nay, dear one!" whispered Florence, as he drew her to his heart, "An' this be the effect of my music, I will return Lady Ormond's lute. I thought to give you pleasure, and instead thereof, I have but given you pain."

"Not pain, Florence,—oh! not pain—surely no!—but to think of *then* and *now*!—To see you here—a prisoner—and on my account!—Oh! my husband! well had it been for you that we never met!"

"Say not so, Aileen, say not so!" said Florence, with sudden animation; then lowering his voice to a whisper, he added—"You may see me free ere long. Be of good heart!"

Lady Ellen started, looked in her husband's face, saw there something that confirmed his hopeful words, and a thrill of joy ran through her heart. Just then the turnkey appeared at the door—it was the signal for her departure, and in a tumult of mingled hope and fear, she rejoined her attendants without.



## CHAPTER IX.

THE order of Queen Elizabeth to her Lords Justices in Ireland, in relation to the affairs of Florence MacCarthy, was dated 15th of December 1590. On the 19th of January, little more than a month after, the following order of the Privy Council was delivered to the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Owen Hopton:

"To set Florence MacCarthy at liberty, upon certain notice given him by Mr. Wills and Mr. Wade, Clerks of Her Majesty's Privy Council, that the Earl of Ormond is entered bond for £1,000 here to Her Majesty's use, with condition that the said Florence, now under his charge, shall not depart the realm, nor three miles from the city of London, nor repair to the Court without special license in that behalf, first had and obtained from Her Majesty's Privy Council; he likewise having first taken bond of the said Florence himself of £2,000 with condition as above said: and touching the charge of his diet, &c., during his being there, because of his present inability, the said Lieutenant must stay till the next warrant."

Nothing of this new turn in Florence's affairs did his wife know, though often she pondered on the meaning of those words of his—"You may see me free ere long"—until one day, it was the 20th day of January,—who should enter the room where she sat in her city lodgings, but Florence himself.

Softly he entered, having learned from her delighted attendants that his wife was alone. His opening of the door was all unnoticed, and, closing it gently, he stood some moments regarding, with the passionate love of a Celtic heart, the graceful figure of his young wife, where she sat with her face buried in her hands, her elbows resting on a table, her rich dark tresses half concealing the small, white hands, and the taper fingers on which sparkled jewels that Elizabeth herself might envy; they were his own gifts to the high born lady of his love. The unutterable sadness, the weariness of spirit that hung like a pall around that young, slight form, touched Florence's heart; he saw now that the cheerfulness, even gayety, she sometimes displayed during her brief visits to the prison, were but assumed for the occasion, and, for the first time, he reproached himself for having brought sorrow and trouble to her whose life he would fain have made all sunshine.

A hand was laid on Lady Ellen's shoulder; she started, raised her head, met the smiling eyes of Florence, and with a cry of joy rushed into his arms that opened to receive her.

"Oh, Florence!" she whispered, "how—how came you here?"

"By the Queen's good leave," her husband replied, with a half sneer.

Ellen's heart beat fast, she feared to put the question that was on her lips. At last she ventured to falter out, "Hath she, then,—"

"Set me free—nay, sweetheart, that were over-much to expect from the lioness whose foot is on our nation. Thanks to my good lord of Ormond, who hath gone security for me, I am free to live outside the tower, provided I stray no farther than three miles from London!"

There was bitterness in his tone, but Lady Ellen heeded it not—"You have liberty to remain here,—say, Florence, is it so?"

The passionate eagerness of her look and tone was so touching, that it was one of the happiest moments of Florence MacCarthy's troubled life when he was able to answer in the affirmative.

"God be praised that so much is granted!" said the lady, with pious fervor—"Even here we may be happy!"

"Happy!" repeated Florence, as he gazed with mournful tenderness on the face, now so bright, that a few moments before had been clouded with heavy sorrow—"alas! my poor Aileen! the flower of happiness may not bloom in the shadow of yonder prison. Natheless, I am half content to wait for what more I fain would have, since it hath pleased her majesty"—again the cold sneer disfigured the handsome face of the speaker,—“to allow me the sweet company of mine own wedded wife.”

Days and weeks of quiet happiness followed; not even during the first days of their married life in the old baronial halls on fair Killarney's banks, amid friends and faithful followers, and the tale of Sean-

achie and the song of bard, did the charm of wedded love throw a brighter halo over the passing hours, than in that dingy lodging in the dingy London of that day. Strange was the lot of that young husband and wife, so nobly born. Nearly three years had passed since their marriage, and of all that time they had spent but a few days together. Imprisoned, separated,—meeting when they did meet, but in the shadow of prison-walls, with prying eyes and listening ears around, their love had grown the fonder for the difficulties and dangers that beset their path; their life, so divided and yet so united, had a strange and potent charm that the calmest and most peaceful domestic enjoyment could not yield.

Nor did they lack society, when they felt inclined for it. Their visits were ever welcome at Ormond House, for the stern old soldier of Elizabeth, Black Thomas of Ormond, the greatest, truth to tell, of the un-Irish and anti-Irish Butlers,—was the friend and patron of Florence MacCarthy, and his lady-wife had a kind, motherly heart for the daughter of her cousin, Lady Honora of Desmond. At Ormond House the young couple met the foremost men of Elizabeth's Court—Lord Burleigh and his son, Sir Robert Cecil, were not unfrequent guests in the drawing room of the stately Irish Countess; there, too, might be seen the gallant, but unfortunate Essex, then in the first fair dawn of the prosperity that for years dazzled all beholders, and made him the envy of that brilliant court; many another star of

equal magnitude, whose light still illumines the historic page, met there in social converse, but amongst them all was none whose company had such a charm for Florence MacCarthy, as the young and gifted Raleigh, a "bookish" man like himself, a traveler, and a poet.

Raleigh found in the young Irish chieftain as ardent a lover as he was himself of the classic literature of that Augustan age of England, but Florence found not in Raleigh,—how *could* he find in the gay English cavalier, the brilliant satellite of Elizabeth,—that passionate love for the ancient days and the ancient records that was one of his own strongest characteristics. Still there was enough of similarity between the two to beget friendship, and a close and lasting friendship, too, such as was little to be expected between the son of a Geraldine lady and the English possessor of thousands and thousands of acres of confiscated Geraldine lands. There was, in truth, a fascination in Raleigh's graceful manners, and soul-lit eyes that few could resist, and as for Florence MacCarthy, no man of his time was more wondrously endowed with the power of winning hearts. In many a trying hour of his strange life the charm of his person and manners, helped him through the difficulties which interested foes had raised around him, and the strange turns his wayward fortunes took at times were often due to that alone.

Lady Ellen MacCarthy, handsome, and young and

noble as she was, attracted less attention amongst those eminent personages than her husband. Others there were as fair and young as she, and apart from her youth and beauty, there was little to distinguish her from the ladies of her own age, whose presence gave added grace to the brilliant circle at Ormond House. Unfortunately for herself, however, she entered with more ardor than did her husband into the spirit of the gay scenes, which for her, at least, had the perilous charm of novelty. The words of praise whispered in her ear by the gay gallants who hovered about the court, like butterflies in the sunshine, made her heart flutter and her cheek glow, while awaking within her the spirit of vanity, which had hitherto lain dormant in her nature. She still loved her husband, because she was proud of his fine person and polished manners, and because she looked forward with hope to the day when he should take his rightful place amongst the great lords of Ireland. Of the deep current of his inner life she knew as little as she did of the lofty dreams that buoyed his spirit up when the clouds were darkest around and above him.

Amongst the few visitors, and they were very few, who were admitted to the privacy of Florence MacCarthy's lodgings, was a singular looking personage, whose exaggerated style of dress denoted the gayest fopling of the court, whereas, his dark, earnest eyes, and grave deportment, were more becoming a monk's habit. Yet to hear Master Wandesford (as he was

called), conversing with any chance visitor whom he happened to meet, there was full little of gravity in his speech. Then, indeed, his conversation was almost as gay and frivolous as his showy costume.

But it so happened that when Master Wandesford was alone with Florence and his wife, his manner and his discourse were in singular contrast with his fine dress. Grave, earnest, and at times commanding, he spoke with the air of one in authority, and was always treated, both by husband and wife, with respect that amounted to reverence. There were times when he and Florence talked long and earnestly in Spanish, so that even Lady Ellen could not understand what they said, nor did that give the young lady much concern, when assured by her husband that their discourse was on dry and tedious subjects, that could have no interest for her. These subjects, whatever they might be, were always discussed in the lowest possible tone of voice, which gave Lady Ellen no surprise, for she knew, and every one knew, that the sound of the noble Spanish tongue might not be heard in that day so near the court of Elizabeth Tudor.

There were other times, however, when wife or husband was left alone with this very singular gentleman, a watch being kept, meanwhile, on the outer door, and also on that of the small apartment where these mysterious interviews were held. Even the good woman of the house, a grave and sober widow, of some three-score years, was seen in such secret

conference with the gaily bedizened and somewhat martial-looking visitor of Master Florence MacCarthy. Stranger, still, Una O'Leary and the serving men from Carbery, who waited on the nephew of MacCarthy Reagh, and his lady-wife, were occasionally admitted to the presence of this brilliant cavalier, and left in turn to the same private communing with him.

Strange it was, and yet, to those concerned, as natural as could be. It was the times that were strange, and drove men and women to strange devices. To Catholics of that day, in England, and even in Ireland, it was neither strange nor uncommon to kneel and confess their sins to men in the most fantastic costumes,—now a dashing cavalier, with bearded lip and plumed hat,—now a country bumpkin, or a town artizan,—now a grave puritanical minister,—a Calvinist, perhaps, to all appearance,—and again, a traveling merchant, or even a wandering minstrel. When a price, and a high price, was set on the head of a priest,—when not only his own life, but what was of far more importance in the eyes of those faithful ministers of the old religion, the spiritual aids and comforts of the persecuted Catholics, were at stake, it behoved those ecclesiastics who ventured to remain in the British dominions to assume such disguises as were most incompatible with their sacred calling, and, therefore, less likely to be penetrated by the piercing eye of bigotry or cupidity.

This being premised, for the information of such of our readers as have made no particular study of the sub-strata of the history of those days, it is easy to divine that this mysterious visitor of Florence MacCarthy's was a priest. But even they who guessed so much of the truth, may find it difficult to realize the fact that the gentleman, the plumed and bearded cavalier in slashed doublet and silken hose, was not only a priest but a Jesuit, and a celebrated Jesuit, too, the renowned Father Archer, whose name is so honorably interwoven with the Catholic struggles for freedom of conscience, in the British Islands, in the latter half of Elizabeth's reign.\*

The occasional society of this eminent scholar and devoted missionary was one of the chief enjoyments of the learned and accomplished chieftain of Carbery. His wife neither could nor did participate in the high intellectual pleasure of their conversation, when it turned on ancient lore, sacred or profane; and when they came to speak on subjects of more immediate and absorbing interest, she was never present, her excessive timidity having more than once betrayed itself in a way that alarmed her husband, when even a casual allusion was made to the secret hopes and plans of the oppressed Catholics.

\* A little later than this, when Florence's enemies were raking up all imaginable and unimaginable "misdemeanors" whereof to accuse him, it was one of the grave charges brought against him—and witnesses were even suborned to prove it—that he was in the habit of receiving visits from the "pestiferous Jesuit, Archer, and other such deadly enemies of the Queen, in sundry disguises."

This nervous fear of giving offence to the ruling powers so grew upon her that she came, after a very little while, to dread the visits of Father Archer, knowing that the discovery of their intercourse with him would be hopeless ruin to her husband, and herself; perhaps even death. Glad and thankful as she was for the opportunities they afforded them all of occasionally receiving the sacraments, yet her fears so overmastered all other feelings, that Florence was at length forced to request the good Father to come no more to their lodgings, unless when sent for.

"We can meet elsewhere," said he, "Master Wandesford,"—even in their most private converse the word *father* was seldom used by Florence—never, indeed, except in confession, being far too dangerous for unnecessary use.—"We can meet elsewhere,—at Master Southwell's in the Strand, or the Widow Smithwick's, belike, near Temple-bar, so long as you and I remain in London, the which, for one of us, at least, I pray God may not be long."

"I am well content that it be so, Master Florence;" said the honest burgher, for such was, at the time, Father Archer's outward semblance; "I have noted your lady's fears with much concern, and would fain ease her mind by absenting myself from this house. In her present state it behooveth you, my son and dear friend, to see that she have as little disquietude as may be."

"The more so, good master," said Florence drop

ping his voice almost to a whisper, his cheek flushing and his eye kindling with a new and strong emotion,—“the more so, that if she were once a mother, and the mother of a son, it would spite some we know, and put certain “rights” we wot of in more imminent peril.”

“Talk not so, my son! talk not so,” said the supposed burgher; “leave those matters to Him who ruleth all,—let us to other matters. Touching that letter of Don Dermutio,—write the answer as soon as may be, and I will see that it be sent by a safe hand. There is a Flemish vessel now in port waiting for a fair wind to set sail. The chance is a good one.”

“Surely yes, but the safe hand you speak of,—know you well who he is?”

“It were strange an’ I did not, my son,—he is one of ours. No need to mention names.”

“I will write the letter ere I sleep to-night, good master!—Where would you that I send it?”

The place was named, and the visitor soon after retired. It was long before the friends met again; some sudden and secret orders reached Father Archer next day, from his own superiors, and the next Florence heard of him he was in Madrid, between which capital and the British and Irish cities years of his busy life were spent. The letter to Don Dermutio Mac Carthy, he delivered himself in the Spanish metropolis.

The reader may, perhaps, desire to know who

this Don Dermutio Mac Carthy was, with his Spanish-Irish name. He was a cousin of Florence Mac Carthy, a zealous and devoted priest, whose Irish name of Dermid was made *Dermutio* by the Spaniards, during his long residence amongst them. He was for many years, an active and efficient agent of the Irish Catholics in Madrid. He was much esteemed by King Philip the Second, their great patron and true friend, a monarch whose name and fame have been blackened by Protestant bigotry, precisely because of his entire devotion to Catholic interests, and his stern, consistent, uncompromising hostility to the new religion, which he had himself seen spring into existence,—a monstrous excrescence on the Church of Christendom. Looking back on those days, when the Irish portion of the Church was passing through the Red Sea of persecution, to the Catholic student of history no prouder figure appears than that of the dark, stately husband of Mary of England, by lying Protestant histories called “Bloody Mary;” the Catholic King *par excellence*, the net unworthy son of the great Emperor Charles the Fifth,—Philip the Second of Spain!

And so, it is probable, thought his cotemporary, Florence Mac Carthy, a man fully capable of estimating the great Catholic prince who alone, of all the crowned heads of Catholic Europe, Elizabeth feared. None may now tell how often the figure of that Spanish King, in his grand and gloomy palace of the Escorial, in the mountain solitude where

he had built himself a home, in accordance with his contemplative mind and mortified life,—shed the brightness of hope on the dark prison cell wherein many an Irish chief was expiating the crime of conspiracy against the baleful power of the tyrant Elizabeth. And none knew better than Florence Mac Carthy what the persecuted Catholics of Ireland owed to Philip. None could better appreciate the stern grandeur of his character, the evangelical purity of his life, his life-long, never changing devotion to Catholic interests, than Florence Mac Carthy, the prisoner of Queen Elizabeth, the high-born chieftain, the lord of broad domains, reduced by English Protestant tyranny, to a condition in which he could hardly provide the common necessities of life for himself and his delicately nurtured wife.

Whatever hopes he based on the friendly aid of the Spanish monarch, and his own fertility of invention and diplomatic skill, were, indeed, sorely needed to keep him from utter despondency. Day by day his affairs were assuming a more desperate aspect. From the confusion and neglect following his long absence from Ireland, now fully three years, his remittances became less and less as time rolled on; even for that little he was indebted to the active exertions of his only brother, Dermod, his junior by some years, who was devotedly attached to him. One by one, Florence was forced to dismiss the few attendants whom alone he had retained; only Una O'Leary, and one of his own serving-men were all

that now remained, and even this poor retinue their master found it hard to support. He had even raised mortgages on some of his lands, still hoping that the day might soon come when, restored to home and freedom, he could retrieve his fast-breaking fortunes.

Vain, alas! his hopes!—Month followed month, and matters grew worse instead of better. Florence was still a prisoner, notwithstanding his earnest petition to the Queen,—less and less grew the remittances from ruined Ireland, and the temporary expedients, whereby the harassed chieftain had hitherto eked them out, began at last to fail; he could not go on mortgaging for ever, and he had borrowed so often that he had well nigh exhausted that wretched source of supply. To crown his misery he saw his cherished wife pining, day by day, pining like a prisoned dove, for air and sunshine, for her own free hills and streams, and the world of beauty that lay around her ancestral home. Debarred by her present condition from appearing at court, or visiting the few friends she had in London, Lady Ellen was virtually a prisoner in the heart of smoky London. This restraint and the many inconveniences to which she was subjected were trying enough to the mother, but worse than all was the separation from her mother even when a mother's loving care was most needed. Under such circumstances it is not strange that the young lady became more petulant and more irrita-

ble day by day; her mind was not of that elastic kind that springs up from under the pressure of difficulties, and shines the brightest when clouds are dark around; Lady Ellen not only felt her trials and troubles and humiliations but she made others feel that she did so. Even the husband that she still loved, with all the fervor that was in her nature, was made to feel at times the effects of her increasing petulance.

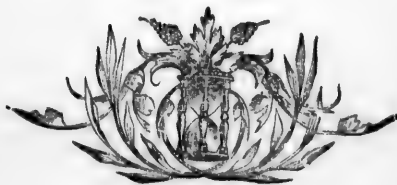
Any other than Florence MacCarthy would have sunk into hopeless despondency under such accumulated trials. Stout and brave as his heart was, and great his faith in the future, he found the load almost too heavy for his shoulders, strong and broad as they were. With an elegant poet of our day he might have said:—

My heart is hot and restless,  
And my life is full of care,  
And the burden laid upon me,  
Seems greater than I can bear."

But dark and dreary as were the clouds around him, and weary as he might well have been of life, his pale cheek glowed, and his eye flashed with a joyous light when word was brought him in the lonely study-room, where many of his hours were passed, that a child was born to him.

He hurried to his wife's bedside—he stooped to kiss her pallid brow, and heard her whisper, with her own old smile of love and hope, "Florence you have a son!" The babe was placed in his arms by

the delighted Una, and while thanking God in his inmost heart for the safety of mother and child, a world of light, and hope, and joy broke on his darkened spirit. The woes of imprisonment, the weariness of exile, the harassing cares that made life a burden,—all were forgotten, as the young father gazed on the face of the unconscious babe who might some day rule the half of Munster, the future Earl of Clancarthy!—His heart was full, too full for utterance,—silently and tenderly he laid the infant on the mother's bosom, and went to indulge, unseen of any, the new and delightful emotions that filled his heart.



## CHAPTER X.

VERY humble was the London lodging in which this young son of Florence MacCarthy entered on the stage of life ; no pomp surrounded the cradle of the infant heir of Desmond and of Carbery ; no trumpet sounded, no herald proclaimed that a grandson was born to the Earl of Clancarthy, the head of a princely Sept !—In poverty and obscurity his life began, whatever its after course might be. Sad as this was to the young parents, and keenly as they felt it, they welcomed the young stranger none the less joyously, and in due time Florence succeeded in finding a priest to baptize him. They gave him his grandfather's name, Donald, and lovingly committed himself and his fortunes to the Providence of the future.

It was autumn then ; autumn in the fields, in the woods, and in the orchards,—autumn wherever nature reigned, but alas ! little of the autumn glories reached Lady Ellen MacCarthy in the dull London chamber where she spent her hours of convalescence, nursing her infant son, or Florence in the poor little room where he sat with the few books he had sent for to Ireland, and others that Raleigh had given him, pondering over the past of his race and country, and his own bright dreams for both, all the more fondly cherished that they were nourished in silence and in solitude, under the penalty of death for treason—

against the Protestant Queen of England. How the fair young mother welcomed the rich, mellow sun-beam,—all the more precious for being rare,—that fell on the face of her sleeping babe—as it lay on her knee, thinking the while how lovely was earth and sky, that day, around her childhood's home!—And how Florence, seeing it come struggling out through the dull London fog, started from his old-world dreams and remembered that he had been awaiting a fine hour to go to Greenwich Palace to petition the Queen, for the hundredth time, to allow him, of her great clemency, to return to his country!—That autumn sun was gilding many a stately castle that called him lord, and many a green hill-side, where his clansmen roamed at will, in his own fair land beyond the sea. Yet for him,—and the thought brought a smile of unwonted bitterness to his face,—for him, he dared not have set foot beyond the threshold of his temporary dwelling had he not obtained, through Lord Burleigh, a *protection* from the Queen, forbidding his creditors to molest him. His creditors! Yes, it was even so,—poorly as he and his wife lived, with Una as their only permanent attendant, of late days, his resources, ample as they were, had at length utterly failed; even the devoted exertions of his brother could no longer raise money for his expenses in London from amongst the host of robbers who were settling, day by day, on the rich plains of Carbery. Time was gliding by—already had Florence been some six years in captivity, between Cork,

Dublin and London,—with so many powerful enemies, all selfishly interested in his prolonged imprisonment,—with his estates divided piecemeal amongst English adventurers, even some of his own kindred having helped themselves to a slice,—with nothing to expect from his father-in-law, whose dissolute habits left him nothing to spare for the calls of duty and affection, unable longer to obtain money by mortgage on lands which were actually in the possession of others,—even the professional money-lenders from whom he had been raising funds at ruinous rates of usury, were unwilling to make further advances, and the few friends who had been aiding him with loans being as tired of lending as he was of borrowing,—well might Florence MacCarthy shrink from going abroad in the dingy streets of London, where the name of his creditors was legion!

By a great stretch of Elizabeth's bounty, his sad complaints of poverty and debt obtained the *protection* above referred to, so that he could come and go within the limits of his leave, as his occasions required, without fear of being arrested and thrown into a prison worse than the Tower. In this way the harassed son-in-law of the Earl of Clancarthy was enabled to go in person from time to time to renew his endless petitioning at court either for leave "to go into Ireland," or for some pecuniary grant that would give him and his lady-wife the means of support. Other occupations he had that kept him

for hours at a time in the vicinity of the Inns of Court, where he might be seen some part of almost every day in earnest conversation with some one or other of the young Irish lawyers who were, even then, prosecuting their studies within the time-honored walls of either Temple or "the Inns."\* The increasing difficulties of his position, and the manifold complications of his affairs necessarily drove him for counsel to those lawyers who, being of his own country and his own religion, took an interest in his affairs, and were willing to give him the benefit of their legal knowledge for friendship's sake. It was, indeed, one of the peculiarities of Florence's strange career that much of his time was spent in the company of lawyers and "law-students!" Like some stately deer of the Desmond wilds, hard pressed by the hunters, year after year of his troubled life, and by nature cool and wary, he was fain to have recourse to the wiles of the fox to keep his enemies at bay, and to save his estates from the spoilers.

No small portion, too, of his days in London were spent in search of the means of existence—what is now called, in vulgar parlance, "raising the wind."

Such was the life of Florence MacCarthy when he one day entered the room where Lady Ellen sat, —pale and pensive, watching the last rays of the

\* There exists amongst the State Papers a list of "The names of Irish gentlemen, Students of Law in Gray's Inn," which is shrewdly conjectured by the learned biographer of Florence MacCarthy to have been made out at some period of his long imprisonment in connection with the charges that were forever being trumped against him.

wintry sun as they faded away into the evening shadows. She looked languidly up, as her husband entered, but there was something in his face that instantly changed the expression of hers.

"You have had tidings, Florence!" she cried, bounding forward with the eagerness of youth—"what of my mother?"

"Nought of your mother, but somewhat of my good uncle, Sir Owen MacCarthy."

"And what of him?" she said, in the careless tone of one who felt nowise interested in the answer.

"He is dead."

"Poor Sir Owen!—Peace to his soul!—Heard you aught besides?"

"Nay, methinks that were enough," said Florence, his cheek flushing with anger; "he was ever my very good friend, and could he but have had his way, my cousin, Donald Pipi, would not be MacCarthy Reagh, as he is this day."

"Donal Pipi,—the Tanist—then who is Tanist now of that country?" said Lady Ellen in the same listless tone.

"Truly your memory is but short, Dame Ellen!" said her husband, coldly,—"*else you need not ask the question. I marvel much that you are so oblivious in such matters.*"

The pale face of the young wife lit up with sudden animation; she started as it were from a lethargy, and fixed her flashing eyes on her husband's face; "Florence! *you* are the Tanist!"

"It is even so, Ellen !" said Florence, gloomily; "I am Tanist now of MacCarthy Reagh's country, but full dearly hath the honor cost me, an' the old saying be true that a trusty friend is hard to find. *I have lost one*, and little have I gained so long as mine enemies hold my lands, and the Queen my body."

"Natheless," said his wife, cheerily, "it is worth the wishing for, to stand next to the rod of MacCarthy Reagh."\*

"A little money were better worth wishing for at this present," said Florence, with a bitter smile. "An' we might live on names and titles, we need not want now. I fear, sweet wife, the Tanist of MacCarthy Reagh's country will find it no easier to provide what is needful for himself and others, than the lord of fair Carbery, or the son-in-law of MacCarthy More. But cheer thee, Aileen! I have better news for thee—I met a gentleman from Cork to-day who advanced me some few pounds that will keep us a little longer,—perchance, till I have leave to return home."

In her joy at hearing of the money they so sorely needed, Lady Ellen heeded not the cold smile, or the bitter tone that gave strange significance to Florence's words. Indeed, there was often a hidden meaning in his words and in his looks that the young wife could not fathom, and perchance, would not, if she could.

\* The Rod here meant was the Wand of Sovereignty amongst the Celtic Irish.

Alone with his books that evening, Florence MacCarthy was a different man. There was a light in his eyes and a flush on his cheeks that told of burning thoughts within. A book lay open before him, but he was not reading. His ever-active mind was hard at work on some aerial fabric that appeared to please him exceedingly.

"Lord of Carbery," he murmured low,—"Tanist of MacCarthy Reagh's country,—son-in-law, and, therefore (failing male issue), if not the natural, at least the probable heir of MacCarthy More, in virtue of his hereditary, though new-made title of Earl of Clancarthy,—what is to prevent me, were I back in Munster, from taking the first place amongst the lords of the old race?—And then—with the promised aid from beyond seas—and the rising in the North that may any day be looked for—," he paused—the fire of his old Spanish blood flashed brighter still from his kindling eyes—his whole frame trembled with the electric thought that shot through his veins,—he stood up in the strength and pride of his noble manhood, reared his tall form to its grandest height,—then muttered,—as it were, hissed, between his teeth,—“Then, Elizabeth Tudor, look to thy hold on thy ‘realm of Ireland,’ and thy ‘rights of reversion’ to Irish lands!—The day may come, proud Queen! when Irish lords and gentlemen may marry and give in marriage without leave of thine,—ay! and practice ‘Popish rites,’ without fear of thy penal laws!”

\* \* \* \* \*

The long dark winter had passed away, and the stormy winds of March were waking the sleeping earth to Spring's first life. The woods around Killarney were already tinted with the faint green which in the genial climate of Ireland comes with the latter days of March, when the winds have sunk to rest in the lap of Spring and Nature begins to smile in the sun's vernal rays.† In and around Pallice Castle there was joy, for the young daughter of MacCarthy More was back again in her native halls and with her a babe of beauty, around whose cradle the hearts of the men of Desmond gathered as a sacred shrine. Even the reckless Earl of Clancarthy was softened to human love and kindness, and breathed an unwonted prayer of gratitude to heaven, as he bent over the first-born of his daughter, the heir of his Earldom, by English law, and his probable successor in the chieftainship.

There was one thought, however, that troubled the now aged nobleman then and after,—so much of his lands had passed into the hands of the Browns, when he little hoped to have an heir male of his own blood! This was a bitter and a mortifying recollection, and, truth to tell, Earl Donald, never remarkable for patience, cursed his own folly many a time, now that kind Heaven had sent him an heir in whose veins was none but the purest blood in Munster.

† *March comes in like the lion, and goes out like the lamb, is a common saying in Ireland.*

But little cared the Countess Honora as she pressed to her heart the child who came to bless and cheer her declining age,—the child in whose infant features her fancy already traced a resemblance to her own son, so early lost, so fondly remembered,—the child who was to fill the vacant place in her heart, as in the family honors and possessions. By all the retainers and clansmen of that country the new arrival was hailed with unbounded delight; it seemed as though the young Baron of Valentia had come back from the grave, and the elder line of the MacCarthys was not, after all, to perish out of the land.

Joy reigned in Desmond of the MacCarthys, in castle and in shieling; even the gloom of poverty that shrouded the country as a pall, gave way for the time to the brightness of hope, easily lit, and as easily quenched, in the light Celtic nature. Truly might those clansmen of Desmond have sung with the national bard of centuries later:

“Tho’ dark are our sorrows, to-day we’ll forget them,  
And smile thro’ our tears, like a sunbeam in showers,  
There never were hearts, if our rulers would let them,  
More form’d to be grateful and blest than ours.”

There was joy, too, in fair Carbery,—whose people although “protected” in their several holdings, suffered in many ways from their lord’s imprisonment. They saw cause for hope, not only in the birth of an heir to their well-beloved lord, but in the permission given his wife to return with her son to Ireland. Amongst all the MacCarthys and their

vast connections, indeed, through all the great Irish houses of Munster, the news was hailed with delight that the young heir of Clan Carthy was safe in Ireland with his mother. The news of the child's birth had been welcomed with joy amongst the chieftains of the old race, who exulted in the thought that the English Queen would thereby lose her "right of reversion" to the broad Earldom. So long as the young baron was in England they had feared that his life might be secretly sacrificed to Elizabeth's cupidity, hence the general joy amongst the Catholic lords and chiefs when Lady Ellen MacCarthy arrived in Munster with her son.

Very different, as may be supposed, were the feelings with which the English undertakers and the English officials,—themselves undertakers on the largest scale,—regarded the event. Letters are found among the English State Papers from Sir Geoffry Fenton, the Queen's Bishop of Cork, and others, complaining of the honors paid in Munster to Florence MacCarthy's son. "Here is a young child of Fineen MacCartie's," wrote the dignitary just mentioned,—“who, after this country manner, is used among the people as a young prince, carried about the country with three nurses, and six horsemen, when he removeth to any place; and happy is he that can have him to foster for a month! and so from month to month, to the best of the country to be fostered, with such songs of rejoicing in the praise of his father, Fineen, and the young *Imp*, that it were good his father, at

his coming over, should be looked into, which will be very shortly, as his cousin, Donell McCartie, which came lately out of England told me.”\*

From this highly evangelical and Christian-like epistle of the dignitary of the Tudor Church in Ireland, we see, as in a magic glass, the enthusiastic reception given to this child of promise; we can see the splendor by which he was surrounded,—the care and attention lavished upon him,—we can hear the “songs of rejoicing in honor of the child’s father,”—and thence we can easily account, as the worthy churchman did himself, for the outburst of wrath the whole crew of English robbers against “the young Imp,” and his father!—And the “Donell MacCartie” who brought from London the alarming news that there was a likelihood of Florence’s return, was himself one of the worst enemies of both father and child. He was no other than Donell Pipi, the new MacCarthy Reagh, whose recent visit to London had been for the very purpose of cutting off his envied and hated kinsman from the succession to the chieftainship by surrendering his lands to the Queen and receiving them back from her, in English tenure, by which means his possessions would go at his death, to his own children. For the present, Donell found his design impracticable; his uncle, the late MacCarthy Reagh, and other chiefs of the Sept, knowing his jealous dislike of his cousin, and fearing that he might endeavor to change the course of suc-

\* Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy More, p. 88.

cession by adopting English tenure, had met in council, some years before Sir Owen's death, and also before Florence's marriage, and bound Donell, under a surety of £10,000, "to leave the usage of Tanistry, as he found it." So, Florence hearing, as he managed to hear everything, that his cousin, the new MacCarthy Reagh, was in London, at once divined the object he had in view, and in the course of a short visit, apparently of courtesy and respect, gave Donell to understand that in case he attempted to interfere with his right to the title and lordship of MacCarthy Reagh, he would make him pay the £10,000 to the last farthing,—and moreover, he warned him, with that calm earnestness of manner which gave such weight to all his words, that he would find his attempt useless, for he had friends at Court who would see no such injustice done him. Donell put on airs of injured innocence, and declared himself guiltless of any such design; privately, however, he made inquiries which satisfied himself that Florence had only spoken the truth, in relation to his influence at Court, and that nothing could be done in that quarter; so he was fain to go home as he went, none the better for his visit to London, but more envious than ever of the polished and high-bred cousin who, prisoner as he was, and with all his resources cut off, could yet defeat the machinations of his enemies, and make for himself powerful friends at the very Court of Elizabeth! "It was ever so with Fineen," said the young MacCarthy

Reagh. When but a boy, in our sports around Kilbrittan Castle, he was first and best in everything; he made friends of high and low with his handsome face and his fair speech. He won Aileen MacCarthy, and the Tanistry of all Clan Caura, by his soft speech and smiling eyes, and Spanish love songs. Ay! Spanish!" and the baffled chieftain chuckled with the base triumph of a mean spirit. "His Spanish songs, and Spanish tongue, and Spanish ways can all be turned to good account against him. Never mind! *There is luck in leisure*—it's a long lane has no turning,—so Fineen MacDonogh! we may be even with you yet."

Strange to say that, with all his wondrous power of winning hearts, with all the love that gathered round him, and all the hopes that centered in him, no man in Munster of his day, even in that early period of his long and chequered life, had so many or such inveterate enemies as Florence MacCarthy!

And his young wife, his wife of five years, she to whom he had given much love, and would have given more but that, all too soon, and yet too late, he discovered that there was, between him and her, little in common, little community of thought, or aim, or anything that binds hearts together,—how did she spend those months of separation from her husband, of reunion with her parents? Oh! Aileen MacCarthy! wife of a man whose dreams were high and noble, who would fain have served his country, while advancing himself,—but whose every effort,

every generous or patriotic aspiration was crushed by mountains of difficulties—Aileen MacCarthy! what didst thou, daughter of the first Irish chieftain of Munster, to advance *his* interest, or Ireland's, or thine own? From thy lone, unhonored grave comes the sad response—"Nothing!—Naught did I for Florence, when he sent me, with our son, to make friends for him and his cause in Munster,—nought did I for husband or country—little, even, for myself."

Glad to find herself back again amongst friends and kindred, welcomed home to her father's castle, where the board was spread and the harp resounded in honor of the so-long absent daughter and the infant heir she brought back from the Saxon land for the failing line of MacCarthy More, Lady Ellen thought but seldom of her husband in his lonely room in the stranger's land,—of his days, so full of anxious solicitude, of racking thought,—his nights of study more than sleep, of feverish dreams, of wakeful, weary watching. The five years of her married life had but added to her rare beauty; her slight form had assumed larger and fuller proportions, and if the girl of nineteen, whom Florence MacCarthy wooed and won, had been passing fair to look upon, fairer still was the young matron of twenty-four, whose rich, ripe loveliness was now the theme of many a song, the admired of every eye. Lady Ellen knew it,—she knew that even at Elizabeth's Court homage was paid full often to her beauty while she awaited the Queen's pleasure with regard to her husband,—

and the vanity that had hitherto lain latent in her heart, grew by degrees, not slow, into the ruling passion of her nature.

Under this evil influence, even maternal love grew faint and feeble, and Lady Ellen was nowise sorry to be rid, by the time-honored custom of "fosterage," of the charge of nursing her babe. It is true she sometimes accompanied him when he was taken for fosterage to the house of some great chieftain, as described by the English Bishop of Cork, for she was not insensible to the honor of being the mother of Florence MacCarthy's son, in whose person the two chief branches of the Clan Carthy might one day be united; but oftener still she remained at home, where her father's declining health obliged him to keep more indoors, and where times were gayer than of old, for Earl Donald, although subdued by disease, and a better man than was his wont, was as fond of gay company as ever. It was a joy for the aged Earl, purer than his heart for years had known, to have his only child near him, shedding light and beauty on his fortress-home; with his wife he never had much community of feeling, and now, when sensible, all too late, of his ill-treatment of one so deserving of a happier lot, the sight of her pallid face, and grief-silvered hair was something he wished to avoid as far as might be.



## CHAPTER XI.

LADY ELLEN and her infant son had arrived in March at Pallice Castle; in the lightsome way already described, the spring and summer were spent by her gay ladyship, who gave herself as little concern about passing events, outside her own enjoyments, as ever did her father in his most reckless mood. And yet there was enough, even in her own affairs, to make her both sad and sober. Florence was still in London, petitioning, as usual, for leave to go home; often, it would seem, on the point of succeeding in his efforts, but as often foiled by some new device of his enemies, foremost amongst whom, for reasons of old standing, was his countryman, and neighbor, as one might say,—David Barry, Lord Buttevant. Of all the numerous foes whom self-interest and envy, and other base passions, had banded against him, Lord Barry—as he was commonly called—was the most persistent, the most bitter, and the most disliked by Florence. Indeed, whatever of bitterness was in Florence's nature seems to have been all exhausted on this Norman-Irish Viscount. To Barry was, in a great measure, to be attributed his long imprisonment at that time, a fact of which Florence was fully cognizant.

Then her husband's affairs were necessarily falling more and more into confusion, and it mortified her,

more than a little to be so often dependent on her father, whose profligate course of life, and neglect of pecuniary affairs, left him little to spare. Her mother grew daily more detached from the world, more rapt in her devotions, more closely united to the God from whom and through whom she alone received consolation. Day by day the distance grew wider between the Christian mother, whose heart had been chastened by suffering, and the worldly-minded daughter, whose less sensitive nature could not suffer in the same degree.

Summer past away with its sunshine and its flowers. Autumn came and went, and the moaning winds of bleak November were making sad music amongst the leafless woods around Killarney, when one gray evening, as the Countess and her daughter sat watching the little Donald whom Una was encouraging to make his first attempt at walking,—an unusual bustle was heard in the hall below; the next moment steps were heard on the stairs, and Florence MacCarthy entered the room!

Speechless with astonishment, Lady Ellen stood, and it was not till she had received and returned his fond embrace that she could realize the presence of her husband. A thrill of joy ran through the sorrow-chilled heart of the Countess Honora, as Florence kissed her hand with the courtly grace that belonged to him, and her grave, sweet voice trembled with pleasurable emotion as she welcomed him back to Pallice Castle. The Countess had,

from the first, recognized in her high-bred son-in-law qualities of mind, at least, more akin to her own than those of even her own and only child, and to see him again was one of the very few pleasures to which she had of late looked forward.

With all her heart beaming in her eyes, Lady Ellen took up her son and placed him in his father's arms, where, however, he did not long remain, for the little heir of Clancarthy had already a temper and a will of his own, and so, seeing only a stranger in the father he had never known, he cried and kicked so lustily to get back to Una that Florence was well content to resign him to the laughing damsel who, although having no special charge of his little lordship, often claimed the privilege of having him a while to herself. The child was sent to his nurse, and then Lady Ellen asked her husband how he had got home at last.

Florence smiled. "I am sent on the Queen's business," he replied sententiously.

"The Queen's business!" cried his wife, much amazed. "Why, Florence, you deal in riddles!"

The Countess, even, looked the surprise she did not care to express.

"It is even so," said Florence, looking from one to the other, with the same humorous expression; "small chance would I have had of coming hither even now, but that Donal—I crave your ladyship's pardon for naming the graceless varlet," he said, in an altered tone addressing the Countess—"but

that Donal hath been playing his wild pranks, worse than ever of late,—the which you may have heard, and that there are signs of trouble gathering in the North!—For these reasons I am graciously permitted to return hither, on condition that I help Her Majesty's servants to keep the peace here in Munster."

"And for that only hath your long imprisonment ended?" said the Countess.

"I pray your ladyship, when was favor bestowed by Elizabeth of England on one of our race or creed, save to further her own interests?—How fares MacCarthy More?"

"Donald is well," said the Countess, her pale cheek faintly flushing; "we see as little of him now as ever. Alas! Florence, things are no better here than when you left us five long years ago!"

"Courage, dear lady!" said Florence, kindly and cheerfully. "Courage—the clouds will clear away at last, and light will succeed to darkness. Now that I have come back, things may go better."

The Countess shook her head. "An' his heart be not changed, Florence, I have nought to hope!—Natheless, I trust in God—not in him! Go now, my son, you have need of rest and refreshment."

"Is MacCarthy in the castle?"

"I know not if he be. Florence!" said the Countess. "Methinks he rode out this morning."

A few hours later Florence and his father-in-law were sitting *tete-a-tete* by the bog-wood fire in the

lower hall. The evening meal was over, and, contrary to his usual custom, the Earl was duly sober, whether it was that the temperate habits of his son-in-law had shamed the old man into unwonted moderation, or that Florence had besought him to keep his head clear for that time, at least. That end of the hall was respectfully left to themselves, while the few gentlemen who had shared the evening meal gathered around the capacious fireplace at the farther end, and the vassals betook themselves elsewhere.

Florence had been explaining to the Earl the terms on which he had been allowed to return home. "You see I am the bounden servant of Her Majesty," said he with his strange smile; "after five years' imprisonment,—my property (for all the Queen's 'protection') gone to wreck and ruin,—I am expected to pacify all Munster,—and bring all Clan Carthy, at the least, to loyal sentiments. The which I will do,—according to mine ability."

"Before God, Florence! you are over cool for a MacCarthy!" said the Earl; his obtuse faculties wholly at fault in penetrating the deep heart of his son-in-law. "What do you propose doing?"

"Hire some hundreds of *bonnaghts*,\* and raise as large a force of my own men as my convenience will permit."

"By St. Bride! you talk as though you had money

\* The *bonnaghts* were mercenary troops in those troublous times, often employed by Munster and Leinster chiefs, according to their military necessities and the extent of their means.

at will!—Methought you were pleading poverty to the old woman in London?”

“And the old woman in London, with her usual liberality, hath given me the means of serving her and myself.”

“Say you so, Fineen?” said the Earl eagerly; “if that be so you are luckier than ever Irish gentleman was before. What allowance hath she made you?”

“I warrant me you will laugh when I tell you. I know not if you remember hearing of a fine that was imposed on David Barry when he was set at liberty after the Desmond troubles, his father having died in prison?”

“Ay, marry, I remember it well; but what hath Barry’s fine to do with your affairs?”

“*You* may not know, McCarthy More, but *I* know,” said Florence, with his calm smile, “that the fine was never levied, and so it might have been forever and a day, seeing that Barry is now the Queen’s most humble servant to command, had not David meddled overmuch in my affairs. So when Elizabeth was graciously pleased to send me home *on her own business*, after five years’ imprisonment—for little crime beyond a love match—to estates that her English servants had had their will of all the while, knowing that it were easier to draw blood from a stone than money (for Irish uses) from the granddaughter of the miser, Henry VII., I reminded Her Majesty of Barry’s unpaid fine, whereat she was well

pleased,—knowing that I could do little to serve her without money—and with her own hand she signed an order for that fine to be levied without delay, and given to me *for her royal uses!* I tell you, Donald MacCarthy, the Lord Deputy in Dublin looked blank enough when I presented to him the Queen's order to have that fine levied without delay, and handed over to me, who hath for so many long years been kept away from home and country, dancing attendance on the Queen with my sad petitions, even since the prison gates were thrown open to me. David Barry hath had his share in my long imprisonment; he shall now pay his fine,† and pay it to *me!*”

With compressed lips, and flashing eyes, and bitter emphasis, Florence spoke; but his father-in-law regarded the matter in a different light. To him it was a capital joke, and he laughed loud and long at the idea of Florence's bringing up the long-forgotten fine, and obtaining a grant of it for his own purposes.

“Doth Barry know of this?” said Elizabeth's rough old Earl, when he had had his laugh out.

“Truly yes,” said Florence; “I came not hither from Dublin before I had got security on his lands, he having refused to pay the fine on the Lord Deputy's demand, on the grounds that he had it not.”

† £500 may now seem a small fine for a nobleman convicted of rebellion; but it must be remembered that £500, in the reign of Elizabeth, was, proportionally, as much as \$10,000 now, or even more.

The Earl looked at his keen-witted son-in-law in blank amazement.

"Fineen MacDonogh," he said, "your father before you was a long-headed man, and a man that played his cards well; but, by my life, he was nothing to you in regard to dealing with these Sassenaechs; but tell me, Fineen, you that know so much, *is* there trouble at hand?"

"The Queen will have it that there is," said Florence, ever cautious in his words, "and so say Norreys and St. Ledger, and others that ought to know."

"What do they say?"

"They say that O'Neil and O'Donnel in the North are making raids even now into the Pale, and must, therefore, find themselves in a condition to resist the Queen's authority. Here in Munster, as they tell me, there is much discontent—the which is truly surprising," added Florence with irony too finely-pointed for his father-in-law's perception. "Even your own son, Donal," said he, fixing his eyes on the old man's face, "is said to be somewhat troublesome to the English in these parts."

"By the Rood! they may well say that," said Earl Donald, with one of his heartiest laughs; "Donal was ever a scrapegrace, as you know full well, and of late years he hath taken to hunting the Browns,—I warrant you he maketh their '*Signory*,' as they call my lands of Molahiffe, over hot for their comfort."

"Much have I heard of his pranks, even in Lon-

don," said Florence, humoring the strange fancy of the reckless chieftain. "I promise you 'the Earl of Clancar's base son' is as well-known even to the Queen herself as either O'Neil or O'Donell. Few dispatches from Munster cross the water now to London without some new story of Donal's 'evil practices.' He is known in Cork and Dublin, ay, marry, in London, as 'the Munster Robin Hood!'"

"And truly he is," said the gratified father of that hopeful son; "they call him not amiss. Donal is a brave boy—if he had fifty faults I will say that for him—I warrant you he keeps the Browns in hot water; he hunts them and theirs—they hunt him and his—so it is all fair; let them fight it out, say I!"

"Donal is a chip of the old block, MacCarthy!" said Florence, as he rose to retire.

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed the Earl, "a chip of the old block!—well, I know not but he is!—at his age I might have amused myself as he doth, were there, as now, a brood of English vipers nesting in the heart of my father's country. Take a draught of wine, Fineen, before you go."

"I thank you, but I must decline the offer," said Florence; "my head cannot bear so much as yours—long though you say it is,—you will hold me excused."

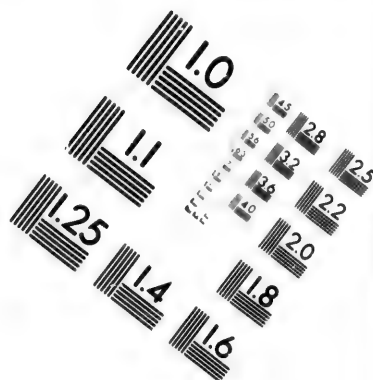
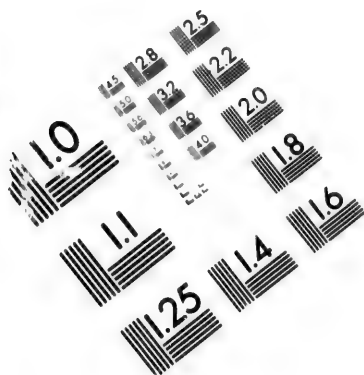
Reluctantly the Earl suffered him to go without emptying another flagon, and when Florence did succeed in effecting his retreat, McFinan, the aged seneschal, was invited to take his place at the hearth,

and his share of the wine—a rare vintage which had gained a good round age in the vaults of Pallice Castle.

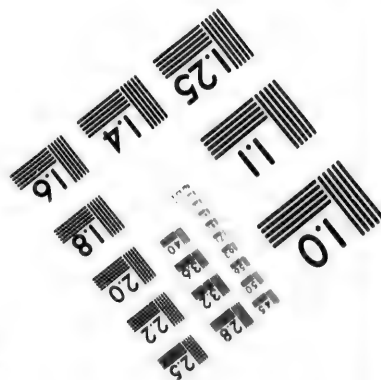
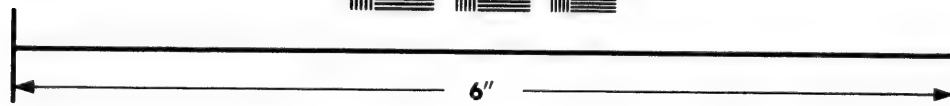
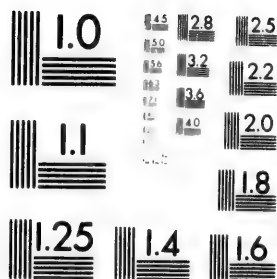
In a marvellously short space of time, considering the straits to which he complained of being reduced, Florence had no less than four hundred of his own retainers under arms, and ready for any emergency. He had made arrangements, too, with some of the captains of the *bonnaghts*, to obtain as many of those hardy soldiers as his needs required, whenever he chose to call for them.

Meanwhile Lord Barry was not idle. Enraged beyond measure by the claim given to Florence on certain of his lands, awaiting the payment of the fine, he cast prudence to the winds and set out immediately for “the court,” to lay his complaint before Her Majesty. This he did with a rashness and recklessness that made him overshoot the mark. He accused the Lord Deputy and others of Her Majesty’s Irish officials of gross injustice towards himself, complained that they had given all his lands to Florence MacCarthy, and scrupled not to hint that those high functionaries were bribed by a man whom he could *prove* to be a traitor to the Queen’s highness.

The latter charge was taken due note of, and private orders sent to the Lord Deputy to take no further steps in the matter of the fine until he had given satisfactory answers to the charges which the Lord Barry was prepared to bring against him. But be-



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fore these instructions reached Dublin, Florence was already put in possession of the lands forfeited by Barry's leaving the country! The hot-blooded chief of Ibawn had made powerful enemies for himself, as he then, and after, found to his cost.

It was early winter when Florence came home; the winds were abroad over the chilled and faded earth. Still there was beauty and the wild grandeur which a poet loves, in the fairy-haunted scenes around Killarney. Dear to the heart of Florence MacCarthy, with its high aspirations, its yearnings after the unreal, its wealth of poetry cramped and pinched by the hard realities of his life,—dear to him, after his five years' imprisonment in smoky London, was the free air, the glorious beauty of that wild region whose charms not even winter could destroy. The rocks and the mountains were there, and the free waters and the ancient woods, and the native skies, and the old-time legends and historic associations that hung over all, and which none knew better than Florence MacCarthy, the life-long student of the past. This free, unchecked communion with nature in her grandest moods, amid scenes that were so intimately associated with the history of his proud race, was, to the chafed and harassed mind of Florence, like a draught of cool water to the parched traveller in the desert waste. It strengthened all his faculties, and braced his energies for new struggles. Sometimes his wife accompanied him, but for her the wintry scene had

no charms, and she preferred the fireside in the castle hall to "the wind-beaten hill," or the lake shore that lay all mournful in winter's icy arms.

With all his love for his wife, her staying in-doors was no privation to Florence. The dreams he dreamed, and the plans he formed, were not to be talked of, least of all to the fair young wife who had already reproached him many a time with the singular aptitude he had of getting himself into trouble. From some of his favorite speculations he knew she would have shrunk in terror,—and his own life might be the forfeit of such revelations, even to her. Solitude was his safest, as it was then his favorite, companion.

Fain would Florence have prolonged his stay at Pallice, as the Countess wistfully besought him to do, but he knew that his people were anxiously looking for his return to Carbery, and there, for the present, his affairs lay. So with his wife and their young son, and a goodly train of attendants, he turned his face homewards, and established his household gods among the faithful clansmen of Carbery. Great was the rejoicing all over Cork County when the young Tanist returned to the home of his fathers after his long captivity in the land of the stranger; ever a favorite amongst the clansmen of MacCarthy Reagh, his unjust imprisonment made him all the more beloved, his brother Dermod having taken care to keep him before them in the way most likely to enlist their sympathies.

Some few there were, however, who were far from sharing the general joy. Donald MacCarthy Reagh was not glad to see his cousin back in his country; desirous of leaving his lands, and the captaincy of his sept to his own son, he could not forgive Florence for coming between him and that dream of his life, any more than he could forgive him for his far greater popularity amongst the clansmen. Then there was worthy Mr. Rogers, the hopeful son-in-law of the English Attorney-General, who had managed to possess himself of over three thousand acres of Florence's own lands left him by his father,—Rogers, assuredly, was not glad. Then there was Lord Barry fretting and fuming, in his baronial castle of Barryscourt, over Florence's out-manceuvring of him in the matter of the fine, and the safe return of so unwelcome a neighbor.

To all these, for the very sufficient reasons already assigned, Florence MacCarthy's release, and his reappearance amongst his native scenes was anything but pleasing. There was no help for it now, however,—whatever their united skill might do in the future,—there was Florence home again, heir apparent to the chieftainship of his clan, with the young son who was one day to inherit the title of Clancarthy, as his father might that of MacCarthy More, in addition to the scarce less proud one of MacCarthy Reagh. Amongst these gentlemen, bound by a common interest, Florence's return, under such circumstances, caused a commotion that was anything but pleasant.

While Florence was hard at work, organizing, training, repairing the sad inroads of neglect on his fine estates, lovingly and zealously assisted by his brother, the high-hearted, generous, Dermot Moyle, his enemies were not idle. Lord Barry, shallow and selfish and vindictive, was made the mouthpiece of the league. The early days of June, rich, radiant June—saw Florence MacCarthy summoned to Dublin to answer the charges of my Lord Barry of Buttevant—was ever man so hunted and harassed? While the grass was green on his native plains, and the flowers made glad the earth,—while his son was learning to lisp his name, and home affections were twining around his heart,—for Lady Ellen was again likely to become a mother,—he was forced to leave his fair southern home for the smoky atmosphere of Dublin,—then far different from the handsome and elegant metropolis of Ireland in our day,—and the slippery precincts of the viceregal court.

A few days' notice were given him, and knowing, from bitter experience, how uncertain was the time, or manner of his return, he availed himself of the little time given him to pay a visit he had been promising to make for weeks past. This was to an old and tried friend of his family, the Lord Courcy, whose castle, near Kinsale, rose on a beetling cliff over the wild Atlantic wave. The aged nobleman received his young friend with every manifestation of joy. Two whole days did Florence spend at Kinsale, rambling most of the time along the shore,

sometimes with his friend, oftener alone. It were worth seeing him when he stood at early morn or late eve "by the sad sea wave,"—the ocean breeze fanning his dark luxuriant hair, his tall form erect and motionless, his face pale and rigid, and his eyes fixed on the distant horizon. A noble specimen he was of those proud Milesians of whom an Irish poet\* has gracefully sung :

In Erin old there dwelt a mighty race,  
Taller than Roman spears.

But of what was he thinking, this noble descendant of the Eugenician princes of South Munster, as he stood during those bright summer hours looking out on the restless waters? Was he dreaming of that "Hy-brasil—the land of the blest," which figures so largely in the traditions of the western and southern Irish tribes?—

"That Eden where th' immortal brave  
Dwell in a land serene,—  
Whose homes beyond the western wave,  
At twilight oft are seen!"

Not so; Florence MacCarthy was no dreamer. His lot was cast amid stern and hard realities, and whatever poetry might have been in his nature, no man of his day brought keener perceptions, more shrewd sagacity, or more consummate prudence to bear on the difficulties by which he was surrounded

\* Since these lines were quoted, and this chapter written, the "Irish poet" has passed from amongst the living—slain by the hand of an Irish assassin!

from youth to age. Standing by that rocky shore, his mind was occupied with grave cares and plans of vast magnitude. If he was not thinking of the fabled "land of the blest" of his Celtic fathers, he was thinking of the noble land beyond the sea from which they had gone forth to possess the "Isle of Destiny,"—of that sunny Spain which was under Heaven the hope of Irish Catholics then,—he was thinking of what the prospects might be of speedy aid, and how that aid,—if come it did, at last,—might be made available. How his look kindled,—how the color rushed back to his cheek,—how he bit his lips almost till the blood flowed, as though to keep from giving utterance to the bold projects,—the high hopes that filled his soul in those hours of apparently idle thought by the sounding sea. That sea washed the coast of Spain,—from Spain must help come. On one point, then, his mind was made up, before he returned to his home.



## CHAPTER XII.

ON the 27th day of June, in that year of grace, Florence MacCarthy was called to answer the charges of the Lord Barry before the Lords Justices. These charges were, for the most part, a reproduction of the former ones, on which he had been examined before the Privy Council, in London, years before. With the old, there were, however, some new counts to the indictment. The very first charge brought forward was concerning "one Allen Marten, gent, born in Galway, student of Her Majesty's common laws, being maintained and kept by Florence Cartie, both in England and Ireland for a time, till he was sent by the said Florence over to Sir William Stanley and Jacques,—hath preferred the said Marten to the Prince of Parma, where he was appointed one of his secretaries!" The next charge was of a similar nature: "William Hurley, born in the county of Limerick, brought up in Oxenford, professor of the Civil Law, was, at the time of the apprehension of the said Florence, his retainer in this realm, employed by the said Florence to the said Sir William Stanley and Jacques, furnished with money and horse, under color to procure a discharge from England for the said Florence, which Hurley remains there as yet by his direction!"

The fifth count in the indictment is worthy of

note : "Finin MacCormac MacCartie, of Glenacrimme, within the country of Carbery, in the county of Cork, cousin and retainer to the said Florence, which Finin pretendeth title to Glenacrimme aforesaid, was sent over by the said Florence to Sir William Stanley and Jacques aforesaid, where he serves and remains as yet."

It was curious that every one of the eight charges brought against Florence on this occasion in some way related to his connections with "the Queen's enemies" abroad, and friends and retainers of his sent, at his own expense, to various parts of Europe. Yet, by his own account, his affairs were in the very worst condition ; he had not the means of raising a force for the protection of his property and the Queen's service, but depended solely on Lord Barry's fine. The fine was still unpaid, and yet the forces were raised and equipped!—If these charges of Barry's were true, Florence MacCarthy was in no need of money. But, according to him, these charges were not true ; he stoutly denied them all.

Says his biographer : "It will be noticed that the two first articles in his reply are concerning law students. It is impossible to peruse his numberless petitions, to see the supreme address with which was carried on a struggle of half a century about his property, the care with which every legal document about it was preserved, the readiness with which, upon occasion, they were invariably forthcoming, and, above all, the consummate skill with

which, at the most critical moments of his career, his correspondence was conducted, and not at once conclude that he must, through life, have retained in his employment very wary and learned legal advisers; doubtless the Brehons of Munster were equally made use of in his intercourse with his own followers !”

As for the clause relating to “Finin MacCormac MacCartie,” thereby hangs a tale so illustrative of Irish affairs in the reign of good Queen Bess, that we shall give it to the reader as Florence repeated it to his wife and her mother on one of the two evenings he spent at home after the examination. As no decision had been come to in Dublin, he found it expedient to repair to London to solicit the good offices of his friends, the Cecils, knowing well the powerful influence that was being used against him.

For reasons known to himself, he did not make the ladies acquainted with the particular clauses of the indictment; he merely said that there was little in them that was new. “But one thing Barry brought in,” said he, “will serve to show the manner of his attack. It is about a poor lad, a young cousin of mine, who, being in sore straits, as many others of us are in these times, he came to me when I was in the Tower, and asked me to write a petition for him concerning his rightful inheritance, the which I did, and found means to have it brought before the Privy Council. Your ladyship,” addressing the Countess, “may, perchance, have heard ere now of the pitiful

murder of MacCarthy of Glenacrimme by his brother's son, Cormac Don!"

"Surely I heard of it," replied the Countess—"I was young at the time, but I mind me well of the fear I had when they told me of the murderer hanging in chains at Cork till the flesh fell off his bones and they shook and rattled in the wind. What had that to do with your examination, my son Florence?"

Florence smiled sadly. "'An the murder had nought to do with it, Countess, the murdered man, or, leastways, his son, had. The poor lad of whom I spoke but now is the son of the murdered chieftain. I know Ellen hath a fondness for hearing stories—"

"Truly I have, Florence!" interrupted his wife, eagerly; "'an there be a story I pray you tell it."

The three sat by an open window, and with the rich plains and swelling uplands of his own Carbery before him, and a distant view of the silver waters of Court MacSherry Bay, where they washed the walls of his ancestral castle of Kilbrittan, Florence commenced his story. He told how, in the days when Sir William Drury fitly represented Queen Elizabeth in Ireland, the chieftain of Glenacrimme, a MacCarthy, and a tributary of MacCarthy Reagh, was foully murdered by his nephew and Tanist, Cormac Don MacCarthy, who thus hoped to enter on the chieftainship before his rightful time; how the murderer, still in the prime of life, but of dark, forbidding aspect, was tried, convicted, and executed for his heinous crime, and how his wretched body

swung in chains outside the walls of Cork city till the flesh mouldered from the bones, and the gaunt skeleton shook drearily in the breeze that swept over the old ancestral plains; how the tale of horror thrilled the heart of Munster, as the noble daughter of the Desmond could bear witness,—how the Queen's officials took up the matter in Cork, and, whereas Cormac Don MacCarthy was convicted of *murder*, and suffered the extreme penalty of the law, tried him for *treason*, and his body being already out of reach, by reason of its bony condition aforesaid, his lands, or rather the lands of his murdered uncle, were declared escheated to the Queen's highness !\*

"You talk full strangely, Florence," said the Countess; "you said but now that Cormac Don was convicted of murder, as by right he should, yet was, after his death, tried for *treason*."

"It was even so, our lady mother!"

"But, pri' thee, how could the murder of his uncle be made out treason against the Queen?"

Florence smiled darkly as he answered: "An' the murdered chief were a bloodless man, his murderer's crime would be *murder*,—nothing more, but seeing that he had been the lord of broad lands and more than one strong castle, to which the murderer would have been the rightful heir, it was expedient

\* By one of those strange coincidences that sometimes startle us in our path of life, the above were the last words of this story written when the author heard of the foul and pitiful murder of her friend of many years and fellow-laborer in the field of Irish history, Hon. T. D. McGee, in Ottawa, Canada West. What follows was written after an interval of two mournful weeks.

to make Cormac's crime *treason*, that so his lands might be forfeited to the crown. I see my little Aileen looks bewildered—my story is not such as gentle ladies love to hear."

"Then wherefore tell it, Florence?" said his wife, pouting.

"That I will presently tell, Ellen," said Florence, gravely; "no mere *seannachie's* tale is this, but a true story of British rule in this land of the Gael. Now, although the fair lands of Glenacrime were declared forfeited to the Queen, there was one strong enough and bold enough to keep Her Majesty out of this, her *rightful inheritance*,"—he spoke with bitter irony,—“that one was Teague of the Forces,—brother and heir of Cormac Don MacCarthy."

"And hath he kept the lands?" said the Countess.

"Ay! marry! hath he, and it pleased the Queen's highness to let him keep them, for Teague was Teague of the Forces, and Her Majesty had no forces to spare for the taking and holding of her lands of Glenacrime."

"A proper man is Teague," said Lady Ellen, laughing, "but what of the poor lad concerning whom you spoke e'en now?"

"The lad is my namesake, Fineen MacCarthy, and he is the son of the murdered chieftain. He was but a young child when the red hand of murder left him fatherless. His mother died of grief for her husband's sad end, and since then, the boy hath been a lonely orphan, dependent on the charity and good

will of his father's friends. Last year he made his way to me in London, and being in a most forlorn condition, besought me to do him what service I could, for the sake of his dead father, who was my father's friend and follower."

"Poor lad!" said Lady Ellen, her eyes full of tears, "it was little you could do to aid him then!"

"But what I could, I did; I wrote a petition for him, and found a friend to present it to the Privy Council."

"And what came of it?"

"What might be expected—nothing. But my Lord Barry will have it now, that I sent the boy on a certain business of my own to persons beyond seas, and that he there remaineth in good favor and good estate. That, as I have told you, is one of the treasonable charges now brought against me."

"But even an' it were so, Florence," said his wife with her almost childlike look of wonder, "what treason would it be for you to help your young cousin to good entertainment in foreign countries?"

Florence glanced at the Countess, and found her eyes fixed on him with a peculiar expression, a look of keen scrutiny that surprised him.

"Ellen will be ever a child," said Lady Clancarthy with her grave smile.

"She hath yet to learn," said Florence, "how many meanings the word *treason* hath in these latter days. Pray heaven she may never have cause to know it better!"

"You speak in riddles," said the younger lady, somewhat testily; "methinks there is something in this young Fineen's story that I have not heard. Where is he now?"

"God and himself knoweth," said her husband evasively; "some there be who say he joined himself to soldiers bound for the Low Countries, and there died. For me I say not, for I know not whether he be dead or living."

Again the eyes of Florence met those of the Countess and both smiled in a way that each understood. Florence was well aware of the vast difference between his wife's intelligence and that of her mother, and it afforded him a sort of pleasure to think that, without his committing himself even to her, his mother-in-law had in part penetrated a secret that weighed heavily on his own care-burdened mind. The story of Fineen of Glenacrime was no more alluded to in the family circle.

Most of the following day Florence was absent, and when, at late evening, he returned home, his wife urged him to tell where he had been.

"I have been to Lord de Courcy's, to bid him farewell before my departure."

"Why, Florence, it is but a day or two since you saw him! Truly you do much affect the old lord."

Florence smiled, and tacitly admitted the fact. He cared not to tell his gay wife what was soon talked of throughout Munster, and written over and over to Queen Elizabeth, that the wily chieftain had pur-

chased from his aged friend, the Old Head of Kinsale with its strong castle, the nearest to Spain of any on Irish ground ! Yet this piece of news was deemed by the English officials another damning proof that Florence McCarthy was "a cunning and subtle traitor !"

A few days more and Florence had bade adieu once more to the fertile plains and pleasant waters of his native Carbery and the rocky shores of Erin ; he placed himself again in the power of the royal termagant of England, and appeared openly at her court to defend his own cause. Many difficulties he had to encounter, and many charges, whether true or false, to answer. He had been levying forces, and putting his castles in repair,—he had made himself master of Kinsale with its noble harbor, fronting on that Spain where Elizabeth's hated and dreaded foe, Philip the Catholic, ruled in power and in might,—and, to crown all, he had been "holding parley with certain of the Queen's enemies in Ireland."

To most men, situated as he was, these charges would have been overwhelming ; not so Florence MacCarthy. His answers were ready : If he had been placing his country on a war footing it was solely for the Queen's service,—if he had secured the harbor and castle of Kinsale, it was to keep it from falling into the hands of Her Majesty's enemies,—and as for his consorting with rebels, he had been using his poor endeavors to dissuade them from any treasonable practices against their gracious sovereign !

The cutting irony of the last words was too finely pointed for even Elizabeth's astuteness to perceive.

"They are waxing bold, those northern traitors!" said the gentle daughter of Henry the Eighth; "marry, their blood is over hot,—we must e'en send leeches among them and physic them with fire and sword,—they have grown lusty from over-feeding, and a dose of starvation will be for their benefit. What of O'Neil and O'Donnel?"

"Of O'Neil I have no knowledge, most gracious liege,—O'Donnel I know somewhat. He is of a most hot and fierce temper,—much addicted to the practices of the old faith and a sworn enemy of English law and all civil manners."

"In sooth, a goodly picture," said the Queen, her choler rising, as Florence intended it should. "O'Neil we know of old,—smooth and fair-spoken he is, but a born traitor at heart we find him to our cost. God's death! my Lord Burleigh!"—turning to that nobleman, who, with his eyes fixed on Florence's face, stood gravely listening to the singular colloquy,—"God's death! but these pestiferous traitors must be stopped though it cost us half our kingdom. How stand affairs in Munster, Master Florence McCartie?"

"I fear not over well, your highness!—the Geraldines are up again, I hear, with some eight thousand fighting men. Rumors there are of further disaffection, the which maketh loyal subjects to bethink them of preparing for the worst."

"And you, Master Florence, being a right loyal

subject," said Burleigh, speaking for the first time, "what course do you propose to take for the furtherance of the righteous cause?"

"With me, my good lord!" said Florence in a tone half thoughtful, half dejected, "it is but the means that are wanting. Men I can command in plenty, but the means of supporting them I have not. The five years of my imprisonment hath left me a poor man, and for my Lord Barry's fine, which it pleased Her Majesty's grace to bestow upon me, it hath done me more harm than good, for I have expended full three hundred pounds in law to recover the same, yet nothing have I gained in return. My Lord Barry and his lawyers have made Her Majesty's bounty of small avail to me; and were the loss only mine, I were not here to speak of it; but in my inability to serve the Queen as my father's son were bound to do, I could think of nothing but an appeal to her *justice and clemency*,"—there was the slightest possible curl on Florence's lip as he said this,—“to enable me to defend her cause and mine own.”

“Before God, my Lord Burleigh! he shall have what powers he will to aid our cause!—See to it that this Barry be kept from working further mischief to Master Florence McCartie!”

So ended the audience. Barry's charges might, at another time, have thrown Florence again into the Tower,—now, in the fears growing out of the increasing troubles in Ireland, fears which Florence

himself had skilfully wrought upon for his own advantage, the wily Tanist went back to his own country not only exonerated from blame (at least for the present) but with the *prestige* of renewed favor at court, and ample powers from the Queen.

The autumn was far advanced when Florence landed once more on the coast of Desmond, and immediately the news spread abroad that all the undertakers in his country were soon to be dispossessed of the lands they had so cavalierly seized and so sturdily held. Florence MacCarthy was high in court favor, so rumor said, and any passing day might bring the gentlemen "squatters" on his estates "notice to quit." His singular preparations, as if for active service, were renewed with fresh activity, and as rumors of war and rebellion came sullenly up from the far North, all eyes began to turn to this most peaceful and law-abiding Munster chief, the young Tanist of MacCarthy Reagh's country. The strange uncertainty that even then attended all his movements,—the deep depths in which his designs lay hid, gave him an importance independent even of his position as a powerful and influential branch of one of the first of the Munster septs. Another rebellion was brewing North and South, and the course that Florence MacCarthy would take was of great importance to friend and foe.

Such was the state of things when our hero was summoned, one bleak, wild day in late November

to the bedside of the Earl of Clancarthy who was dangerously ill. Lady Ellen had been for a week before at Pallice Castle.

One glance at the aged chieftain convinced Florence that there all was nearly over; the closed eyes, the laboring breath, the sunken cheeks and dilated nostrils, showed all too plainly that the first Earl of Clancarthy was passing away. His wife and daughter sat near, the former pale and silent, with her eyes fixed on the face that had once been very dear,—now fast changing into clay; her daughter, with eyes and cheeks red with weeping, for the father who, with all his faults, and they were many and great, had ever been as kind to her as his rough nature permitted.

Silently and sorrowfully Florence joined the watchers, and for the little time that the Earl's spirit yet remained in the flesh, he never left his side. In a whisper he asked the Countess whether a priest had been brought. The pale sad face brightened a moment as the lady replied :

“Truly yes, God sent us a priest; Father McEgan had come hither but yester eve, and it pleased God to give Donald the grace of repentance; he hath made a good confession, as the Father tells us, and received some hours since the holy viaticum. All that can be done to prepare him is done, and while he could speak, or knew anything, he ceased not to crave pardon of God, and of me, his poor wife. God He knoweth how I forgive him all—all !”

"Said he aught of the succession?"

"Fineen!" muttered the dying man, as though his ears had caught the sound—"Fineen—MacCarthy More—no Earl—Honora! poor wife!—forgive—Jesus! Mary!"

A gasp, a shudder, a convulsive motion of the limbs, and Donald MacCarthy More had gone to meet his Judge. The prayers for the Dead were recited,—reverently and tenderly his wife closed his eyes, and all was over for the Earl of Desmond.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the chancel of the ruined Abbey of Mucruss or "Irrelagh of the MacCarthy's," by Killarney's fair waters, the traveller even of to-day may see a plain tombstone, "with some attempt at heraldic device," says a modern writer, "and much defaced by the feet of passing generations since it was laid there; the eye can still, however, discern a sculptured Irish crown, surmounting an equally rude earl's coronet and escutcheon of arms. Modern care has guarded it from further defacement, by crossing the stone with some bars of iron, which now receive the tread of the rude peasant or careless tourist, when trampling on the memorial which tells us that an Irish chieftain, metamorphosed into a belted English noble, sleeps below. It is the Earl of Clancarthy who lies here entombed, the first and the last so entitled."\*

The death of this powerful chieftain is thus recorded in the "Annals of the Four Masters:"

\* Lake Lore, pp. 48-50.

"A. D. 1596, MacCarthy More died, namely, Donal, the son of Donal, son of Cormac Ladrach, son of Teige; and although he was called MacCartie More, he had been honorably created Earl before that time, by command of the sovereign of England. He left no male heir after him, who would be appointed his successor, and only one daughter, who became the wife of the son of MacCarthy Reagh, namely, Fineen, and all were of opinion that he was heir of that MacCarthy who died, namely, Donal."

Little good† was to be said of this last of a long line of princely chieftains in his lifetime, but his death was the death of a repentant sinner, and his wife and daughter mourned him for the memory of his latter days.

† It is not generally known, even to those students of Irish history to whom the name of Donald, first Earl of Clancarthy, is familiar, that he was somewhat of a poet, and that two poems of his, which, from their religious character, must have been written in his later and better days, are still preserved. They are both in the Irish language. One is entitled—"A sorrowful vision hath deceived me"—and the other, "Alas! alas! O benign Mary!" a pious and penitent address to Our blessed Lady.—See *Transactions of the Ibero-Celtic Society*.



## CHAPTER XIII.

THE news of the Earl of Clancarthy's death raised a perfect whirlwind of excitement in the whole of South Munster; Protestant bishops, English undertakers, Irish relatives, all were forthwith up and doing, in hopes of gaining a share of the mighty spoil. Since the confiscation of the Desmond Geraldine estates, after the tragic death of Earl Gerald of Desmond, the Great Rebel, no such windfall had come to the rapacious vultures whose ordinary prey was Irish confiscations. Even the redoubtable Donal, the Earl's "base son," the outlaw whose dwelling had been in the wild fastnesses where English law could not reach, and whose life had been like Ishmael's, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him,—now arrayed himself in English garments, and emerged from his wild retreats as a claimant, no less! for the captaincy of the Clan Carthy, and the vast estates of its deceased chief, who, having left no legitimate male issue, Donal considered himself the rightful heir. A curious sight it was when the fierce outlaw, the Robin Hood of Munster, presented himself, in the ordinary dress of an English gentleman of those days, before the Vice-President in Cork city, to make his submission to the Queen, and put in his claim to his father's hereditary title and the family possessions!—

Very composedly he was heard, and with no disfavor, by the wily official, for English policy then was to encourage all claimants to the estates of the great Irish lords in order to promote discord and strife amongst "the mere Irish."

But of all the claimants to the late Earl's possessions, the most feared by all the others was the one who was least noisy in asserting his claims, the husband of the Earl's only legitimate child. All the others were banded against him. In those days, with the fear of Florence before their eyes, wrote to the English Privy Council, the Bishop of Ardfert, the Brownes and others (we modernize their quaint language):

"Right Honorable, and our singular good Lords, most humbly craving pardon, we have presumed, understanding that Florence McCartie prepareth himself to be a suitor, under Her Majesty and your Honors, for the lands and honor of the late deceased Earl of Clancarthy, to set down unto your Honors the state of the country, as also the condition of the party, with the nature of the people, the troubles may ensue unto Her Majesty and State, with the miseries like to fall upon us poor English Gentlemen, and all English inhabitants here dwelling. The country, a great continent of great fastnesses and strengths, and the said Florence already Tanist of Carbery, a country almost as great as the Earl's, and all these whose names are here inclosed\* being

\* It may not be uninteresting to read the names "inclosed" by the English bishop of Ardfert and the Kerry undertakers. The

Lords of Countries, and great commanders, his allies and followers ! The gentleman himself, a most notable Papist, and a favorer of all superstitious manner of living, brought up with his uncle, James FitzMaurice, and his conversation hath been much with men not well affected unto Her Majesty. Himself and all his house came out of Spain."

An English official, Sir Geoffrey Fenton, also wrote to Sir Robert Cecil, in the spring following the Earl's death : "The Earl of Clancarthy, a great lord in Munster, being now dead, and Florence McCarthy, by marrying with his heir general, having an apparent pretence to the Earldom, I fear some alteration will grow in those parts by Florence, who is more Spanish than English ; and I received this day advice from Munster that Florence already begins to stir coals, in which respect I wish your Honor to advise with my Lord Treasurer out of hand, to have him either sent for thither, or some special letter written to the Lord President of Munster to lay hold of him, to make stay of him in his person, or to see him assured upon good pledges ; for without

"inclosure," as now in the State Paper Office, is—"A knot of such as are Lords of countries, being Fincen McCartie's kinsmen, and followers of the Earl of Clancarthy, within Desmond and the County of Cork adjoining upon Desmond: Cormac McDermod and Teague McDermod (Fincen's aunt's sons) ; O'Sullivan More, married to Fincen's sister ; O'Sullivan Beare ; O'Donoghoe of the Glens ; McGillicuddy ; McCrehon ; MacGillo Niwlan ; McDonnell ; Hugh Cormac of Dungwill ; Clan Dermod ; Clan Lawras ; Hugh Donnell Brik ; McFinan ; McFinan Dhu ; Clan Teage Kettas ; McDonogh Barret ; McAuliffe ; O'Keefe ; O'Callaghan ; O'Daly, with many others, and allied by himself and his wife unto most of the noblemen in Ireland."

one of these two preventions I look that he will be a dangerous Robin Hood in Munster."

Florence did not wait to be "laid hold of," for he immediately set out post haste for London, having first provided himself with a letter of recommendation from Sir Thomas Norreys—not aware, possibly, that Donal McCarthy had received just such another only a day or two previous.

It was before the Privy Council that Florence McCarthy presented his claim in person to the lands of his late father-in-law. Very gravely the Lords listened while he, in true legal phraseology, advanced his reasons, and to him, at least, they were very conclusive, why he, and he only, should be recognized as the Earl's heir.

After a short consultation among themselves, the Lords announced to the apparently calm expectant that although Her Majesty might be graciously pleased to waive her claim to lands which, by the Earl's death, lapsed to her, there were other claimants thereto besides Master Florence McCarthy. There was the aged Countess to be provided for, and there were the lands bequeathed by the Earl to his base son, Donal, known as the Castle Lough estate, the which Donal was in London to petition for; lastly, there was one still greater difficulty in the way, viz.: that the Queen herself had, ten years before, given a patent for the Earl's lands to the late Sir Valentine Brown and his son Nicholas!

This last fact was brought out with an air of

triumph that did not escape the keen and practised eyes of Florence. Not a trace of emotion was visible on his face, yet a fierce delight was burning in his heart as he replied :

"Concerning this patent of Master Browne, now Sir Nicholas, if it be as I have heard, it can nowise affect my claim. Could I but have sight of the document, methinks I could convince your lordships that the patent is not a valid one."

The patent was produced, for, as Florence well knew, Browne had transmitted it to the Council without delay. Word by word it was conned over, patiently and slowly, till Florence placed his finger on a word, and smiled blandly as Sir Francis Walsingham read aloud—"Should the Earl die without *heirs*, then is the Seignory to pass to Sir Valentine Browne and his heirs forever!"

Florence furtively watched the lords while they exchanged significant glances. Seeing that no one spoke, he spoke himself.

"Methinks Sir Nicholas Browne might have saved your lordships the trouble of examining this patent. He knew full well that the Earl of Clancarthy left heirs. Ay! marry, and heirs male, seeing that his daughter is now the mother of four sons, all of whom are sound in mind and body, and as likely to live as any in Munster."

"The gentleman is right," said Lord Treasurer Burleigh, with a grim smile; "Sir Valentine and his lawyer were for once at fault. Master Florence Mo-

Cartie, the matter awaits the Queen's pleasure. It shall be brought forthwith under her highness's notice."

Florence bowed his thanks for this non-committal promise, and withdrew, leaving Her Majesty's Privy Councillors, as he well knew, to discuss amongst themselves the possibility of setting his claim aside in favor of their royal mistress. He had reached the door when he turned back, and, as if with sudden recollection of some very unimportant matter, said, with well-feigned indifference :

"I humbly crave your lordships' pardon, but by a strange oversight, I forgot to give my Lord Treasurer a letter from the Earl of Ormond, and Sir Robert this from Sir Thomas Norreys." And he presented both with as perfect coolness and composure as though their contents nothing concerned him. Before the letters were read he had bowed himself out of the Council Chamber.

Let us remain for a brief space amongst the noble advisers of Queen Elizabeth. While Sir Robert Cecil read Norrey's communication with the impassible coolness of a man who saw nothing particular in what he read, his father was evidently disturbed by what he saw. As he glanced over the letter before him, his brow contracted, a faint flush suffused his deeply-furrowed cheek, and his hands shook with nervous excitement. There was dead silence in the Council Chamber, and every eye was turned on the aged statesman.

"My lords!" he said at length, "there is that in this letter which demands prompt attention. My Lord of Ormond seemeth much to desire that this Florence McCartie shall be sent back to Ireland as soon as may be, and that he be favored in this matter of the succession. The nobleman seemeth to apprehend danger, the which your lordships may perceive from his letter." And he read aloud:

"This bearer Florence McCarthy is now to make repair into England about some suit of his own, which, in regard to this dangerous time, he may be hardly spared from hence. I am heartily to pray you to favor him in his lawful suits, and that he may be dispatched from thence; whom I leave to your favorable regard, and so I commit you to God's most blessed guiding.

"From Dublin, this 18th June, 1598.

"Your fast assured friend,

"THOMAS, ORMOND AND OSSORY."

The faces of Her Majesty's noble councillors lengthened considerably as this alarming document was read by the Lord Treasurer—in a voice that even his habitual self-control could not render steady. That very afternoon, Burleigh had an interview with Her Majesty, and on the following day Florence McCarthy was again before the Queen in person, summoned to give an account of the circumstances that had given rise to Lord Ormond's ominous letter.

There was a thunder-cloud on the royal brow as

the Queen bent her searching glance on Florence MacCarthy. Very meek and submissive was the face of the Tanist of Carbery, as he bent before the throne, but within himself he was saying: "Be as angry as thou wilt, Elizabeth Tudor! angrier yet I hope to make thee ere we part company."

"How now, Master Florence," said the royal vixen; "what troubles are these we hear of from our realm of Ireland? My Lord Ormond, our right worthy Lieutenant-General, is much disturbed on account of some traitorous doings there, as we learn from his letter brought by you to our Lord Treasurer."

"Most gracious liege," said Florence, with eyes cast down in deep humility, as it seemed, but really to hide the fierce exultation that burned in their dark depths; "most gracious liege, your royal subjects in Ireland are sore afraid of evil days coming. O'Neil and O'Donnel are up at last, and with them all the Northern Province, while in Munster, the Geraldines have taken the field under the banner of one James Fitzgerald, nephew of the late rebel Earl of Desmond, whom O'Neil hath made Earl of Desmond."

Old and decrepid as she was, with her seventy years of life, and forty of royalty, bending down her once stately form, Elizabeth started to her feet with all the fierce fire of her younger days.

"Man! what saidst thou?" she cried, stamping her foot, her voice hoarse with rage; "O'Neil did not *dare* to make an Earl of Desmond!"

"My liege! I have told you truly," said Florence

with relentless pertinacity,—“and more than that hath he done. He hath made Donal McCarthy, my wife’s base brother, MacCarthy More!”

Elizabeth clenched both hands as they hung on either side at full length, while she paced the floor with nostrils dilated, eyes burning like living coals and glaring like a tiger’s. A fearful oath burst from her parched lips, but, for some moments, more she could not find voice to say. To and fro she strode with that firm, manlike gait that had distinguished her through life, broken now by fury as well as age, the hands, still extended, opening and closing convulsively. All at once she stopped in front of Florence, and said with a violent effort to control her rage—

“And you, Master Florence MacCarthy!—what hath this mighty O’Neil done for *you*?—Come! out with the secret, man!—What lands and titles hath he awarded to you?”

“None, my gracious liege, none!” was the prompt rejoinder; “it hath not been my fortune to find favor in his sight, as hath Donal McCarthy and James FitzThomas!”

“What think you, my Lord Burleigh?” said the Queen, turning to that nobleman who stood by a silent, but attentive, listener. “Shall we leave O’Neil’s MacCarthy to enjoy his honors, or send Master Florence into Ireland, with power from us to take possession of the Earl’s lands?”

“Your grace’s wisdom will dictate the proper

course," said the aged statesman, with his wonted cool caution.

"Ay, marry, and Master McCartie shall hear of it full soon," cried Elizabeth, still wroth, but graciously disposed towards the man whom she meant to use as a foil for O'Neil's MacCarthy.

Day by day Florence awaited the fulfilment of the Queen's promise, but many days passed, and still he found himself hanging about the Court in precisely the same state of suspense, nothing gaining, but much losing. He took to his old trade of petitioning, but petitioning was of no avail; still no answer came from the Queen. Days passed into weeks, and his anxiety increased in proportion to the lapse of time, knowing that events were transpiring in Ireland that made his presence there more than ever necessary.

One day Florence received a summons to repair in all haste to Greenwich Palace. When the message reached him he was in a state of excitement all unusual with him, pacing his small apartment to and fro after the manner of a caged lion, muttering wild words to himself in the forbidden language of old Spain, and looking as though the warrior spirit of his race had suddenly passed into his usually inert frame. Hearing the message, which came to him in the name of Sir Robert Cecil, he bowed very calmly and said he would wait on Sir Robert without delay. But when the messenger was gone, he burst into a sort of derisive laugh, that sounded strange from

one so staid and so subdued in his ordinary bearing. Not one word he said, but composing his features as best he might, he betook himself to the palace.

He was well pleased to find that it was only Sir Robert Cecil he had to encounter that day. Even Florence MacCarthy dreaded the all-piercing eyes of the royal Elizabeth. Cecil junior looked restless and ill at ease. He was the first to speak.

"I sent for you now, Mr. Florence McCartie," he said, endeavoring, but in vain, to appear perfectly composed, "for that the Queen hath been graciously pleased to consider your claim for loyal service rendered; it is her will that you now take possession of the lands owned by your late father-in-law, the Earl of Clancarthy, the title to remain in abeyance for future consideration."

Florence shook his head. "I fear her Majesty's bounty is somewhat late. Donal McCarthy has taken upon himself the style and title of MacCarthy More, sanctioned by O'Neil, a portion of whose army is even now marching into Munster. What can I do now, I who have not even the means of going back to Ireland? What I *might* have done for the Queen, had I been in mine own country, and master of mine own and my wife's inheritance, I say not now, for it were idle to talk of opportunities lost. When I might have done somewhat for my self or others, I was here in London where I could serve no one."

"Nevertheless, it is the Queen's royal will that you

go into Ireland without delay, and to further your doing so, I am to give you wherewith to bear your expenses thither."

Florence coolly pocketed the order for *one hundred pounds* which Elizabeth, in her close regard to money, doubtless considered a high price for the loyal service she expected from one of the first lords in Munster—at a time when her rule in Ireland was in imminent danger of coming to an end. He looked at Cecil with a smile which even that wily courtier found it hard to understand.

"I know not," said Florence, "whether your Honor or the Queen's highness hath heard the evil tidings."

"What tidings?" asked Cecil with well-feigned curiosity.

"How the Northern rebels under O'Neil have defeated the Queen's troops on the banks of the Blackwater, and are now besieging the strongest fort in Ulster. Truly, O'Neil hath come out of his shell sooner than friend or foe expected."

"Somewhat of his traitorous deeds her Majesty hath heard," said Cecil carelessly, "but my Lord of Ormond hath received orders to proceed without delay against the rebels, and we hope to hear a good account of them soon."

"I pray God you may!" said Florence MacCarthy with a fervor that quite charmed Sir Robert Cecil. Practised as he was himself in the art of dissimulation, he could not read the deep heart of Florence MacCarthy. So he took it for granted that the Tanist

of Carbery was as loyally anxious for the defeat of the insurgent chiefs as he was himself.

It was truly "diamond cut diamond" between the two. Cecil knew that the rebellion had already assumed a most formidable aspect; that the Northern chiefs, flushed with victory, were preparing to march into Munster, where the whole province awaited but their coming to rise almost as one man; that Con naught, never reliable to English interests, was as good as lost, and that even in semi-Norman Leinster the "disaffected" were in the majority. He also knew that the Queen had no forces in Ireland to resist this threatened storm; but it never occurred to his mind, sagacious as it was, that Florence MacCarthy knew more of the matter than he did.

Those were the days when, according to the historian Camden, "the condition of Ireland was in a manner desperate, for almost the whole nation was broke out into rebellion;" when Elizabeth and her Council were day by day informed that "Tyrone receiveth letters from the King of Scots;" "Scotland beareth up this rebellion;" "the King of Spain beareth a great sting of mind against her Majesty," and when every letter that reached the gentle Tudor princess from her trusty servants in Ireland was filled with complaints of "the lamentable state of this accursed country." "The enemy is grown insolent and intractable;" wrote one, "in discipline, and weapons, he is little inferior to us; the men of most

spirit follow the rebels, and leave the rascals to the Queen's service."\*

Much of this general state of things, Florence MacCarthy well knew, and of the particular affairs in his own province he knew more than either Cecil or the Queen, but what he did *not* know was the relative strength of the national army ready to be marshalled by the powerful chieftain of Tyrone, and the ill-appointed horde of "ragged rascals" literally and truly, on whom depended the maintenance of British power in Ireland. How could Florence MacCarthy have realized the fact that whereas the rebels in the four provinces had well-nigh twenty thousand men under arms, trained and disciplined as their enemies admitted them to be, Lieutenant-General Lord Ormond had no more than eight or nine thousand of the "rascals" who alone "followed the Queen's service!" Cecil knew this, and the Council knew it, and the Queen had the mortification of knowing it, too, when she sent her dole to the nobey-connected Tanist of Carbery, to enable him to return to his country after his long and wearisome waiting in London for an answer that perchance would never have come had not Donal MacCarthy, the usurper of the chieftainship, taken sides with O'Neil.

Florence MacCarthy was well pleased when he found himself alone that evening in the quiet of his humble lodgings. Long he sat musing with his head

\* Sir H. Brounker, as quoted from the State Papers by Daniel MacCarthy in his "Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy More."

resting on his hand, his face expressing more plainly than he usually permitted it to do, the thoughts that passed in quick succession through his restless mind. At times his thoughts escaped in words, half unconsciously to himself, and he would start from his seat and pace the floor with slow step and thoughtful mien. His own affairs and those of his country were strangely mingled in his mind.

"Truly Donal hath it all his own way," he said with a contemptuous smile; "with O'Neil at his back, and Clan Carthy at his foot, he must needs fancy himself a great man. It well beseemeth his mother's son to head the men of Desmond!—MacCarthy More!—Donal the base-born—the sleuth-hound of the sept—the wild outlaw—truly we are much beholden to O'Neil! A rare captain hath he given to Clan Caura. But he and Donal shall find that even O'Neil is not king in Desmond. So long as O'Sullivan holdeth out for me, Donal may play MacCarthy More an' welcome. His reign will but last till I come."

He arose and resumed his march, with head bent forward and hands crossed behind his back. After awhile he stopped short and muttered again, in pursuance of another train of thought—"the Queen would send me back now, hoping to use me, her loyal servitor," and he laughed a bitter mocking laugh, "against O'Neil whom, in her wisdom, she thinks hath made me his enemy by favoring Donal. Ha! ha!—they will find us none such bad friends

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when all is told !—And Elizabeth must do somewhat more than sending me an hundred pounds ere I go on her errand !” And again he laughed that deep inward laugh peculiar to himself.

Next day he was called into the presence of the Queen herself, and was told by the lips of royalty, with a graciousness all unwonted, that he was at liberty to return to Ireland whensoever he would. Nay, the Queen condescended to remind him that his wife’s base brother had usurped the possession of the Clancarthy estates, and taken upon himself the barbarous title of MacCarthy More.

Florence’s answer was characteristic. He had suddenly become more stately in his bearing, and looked every inch the princely head of the proud Clan Carthy.

“Most gracious queen,” said Florence, “I am thankful for the new favor you have added to the many ere now bestowed upon me, but in these troublous times I have no desire to return into Ireland, where my present poverty unfits me to render service to your Majesty, and I might perchance fall again under suspicion. The many years of imprisonment I have undergone, and the ruin that hath come upon me, for no cause that I know of,—have made me fearful of going into Ireland at a time when almost every lord and gentleman of mine own race is in arms with O’Neil.”

Elizabeth well understood the bitter meaning of his words, and had she given way to the first impulse

she would have ordered him "to the Tower," but she knew the danger was imminent; she knew that the English rule in Ireland was never so ill-assured as then; she knew that Florence MacCarthy knew all that she did, perchance more, and in his altered tone she read his consciousness of *her* weakness and *his* strength. Florence MacCarthy was no longer the suitor, he was dictating terms,—*his* turn was come.



## CHAPTER XIV.

FLORENCE went to Ireland some time after when it suited his own convenience. What he did there was best known to himself, but it is certain he had done little for the Queen, when the royal lady and her advisers were startled by the apparition of his towering figure in London. He came to complain that between Donal and the Brownes he had no control in Desmond, and could, consequently, do nothing against the rebels, now more powerful than ever in all parts of the country.

Elizabeth stormed at first, and swore that Florence MacCarthy was as wicked a traitor as O'Neil himself, and that too much had been done for him already. But seeing that even her fiercest anger did not much affect Florence, she was forcibly reminded that times had changed, and, after due consideration with her ministers, she commanded his claims to be once for all examined, and a decision given without delay. The result was that the entire possessions of the late Earl were at length bestowed on Florence and his wife; payment to be made to Sir Nicholas Browne of the moneys his father had advanced on mortgages. The motives which prompted the Queen to this magnificent "grant," as it was styled, were plainly set forth—"in hope of his (Florence's) loyalty and service!"

Very grateful did Florence appear, but, although urged to set out speedily for his country whence the news were daily worse, he seemed in no hurry to be gone. Day after day he was to be seen hovering around the precincts of the Court and the Council-chamber. At length Sir Robert Cecil brought him an angry mandate from the Queen to repair forthwith into Ireland if he would not have all the grants already made cancelled and withdrawn. Then came out the reason of his loitering. There was one little clause in the grant whereby the Queen reserved to herself "all the rights and chiefries of the late Earl!" And Florence coolly and methodically explained that those very rights and chiefries were precisely what would enable him to recover his wife's estates from those who wrongfully held them. This concession was not to be thought of, for if there was anything Queen Elizabeth was particularly bent on doing, at that particular time, it was to have and to hold all such "rights," and to abolish all such "chiefries" among "the mere Irish."

A day or two after Florence was summoned before the Council and there apprised of certain traitorous doings of his brother, Dermot Moyle, and others of his kinsmen, who had been found holding intercourse with the rebels. It surely required all the self-control of which Florence was master, to conceal his feelings when informed, on the authority of Sir Thomas Norreys, that "the castles and houses" of his brother and their friends had been taken and

razed to the ground, and further, that he himself being suspected of authorizing and instigating these treasonable acts, it was deemed advisable to detain him in England!

Yet Florence heard it all with the coolest indifference; expressed himself well contented to keep himself out of those home-troubles, and in the most innocent way imaginable asked whether worthy Sir Thomas had informed their lordships of the fall of the strong castle of Molahiff, which Sir Nicholas Browne had stoutly held for the Queen. The lords exchanged significant looks, as though of caution, and answer was made that a rumor of that event had reached them.

"Is it known to your lordships," asked Florence, without raising his eyes, "that it was Donal, the usurper of my wife's patrimony, that led the assault, and that it was by his orders the garrison were slaughtered after a fierce and obstinate resistance?"

This, too, was known, but somehow, it seemed, that Florence's absence became suddenly more desirable just then than his presence, and he was informed that he was at liberty to retire.

A few days after he was called to an interview with Sir Robert Cecil, and by that politic son of a still more politic father, gravely informed that his captivity was at last at an end (hitherto he had been only liberated on sufferance and on heavy bail), and that the Queen was graciously pleased to confer upon him all those "rights" which had appertained to his

late father-in-law. Only the chieftainship was withheld! But all this was on condition that he went immediately to Ireland, and set about expelling Donal and the other traitors who were bidding fair to have all Munster in their hands soon.

"But to clear my country of rebels," said the ever-cautious Florence, "I should e'en be left to work in mine own way. I must be at liberty to parley with the Queen's enemies, without suspicion of treason, when my needs require the same."

Sir Robert was willing to grant this and, in short, all other concessions and privileges in the Queen's name, only Master Florence MacCarthy must start without delay.

And Florence did start accordingly, for the first time in twelve long years a free man. His first visit in Ireland was not to his own home, or the wife he had not seen for months long. The load of anxiety that weighed heavy on his heart made him turn his steps in another direction, towards one who had the power of bestowing, or withholding what most he coveted on earth. A few hours after his landing in Ireland, he was shaking the friendly hand of his brother-in-law, O'Sullivan More, in his ancestral castle of Dunkerrin, near Kinsale.

Older and more careworn both looked than when last we saw them together at Palice Castle by the lake-shore, but the cloud passed away from the brow of each, and the darkened faces brightened with something like the olden smile as the friends exchanged

their kindly greeting, and O'Sullivan welcomed Florence after his long sojourn in the ungenial atmosphere of London.

"Truly it does my heart good," said Florence, "to look once more on the face of a true friend. Owen, my heart is too full for words. But for your friendship I had lost all."

"I know not but you might, Florence," said O'Sullivan with his old frankness and good-nature; "had I not kept the Rod for you, the Desmond estates were worth little. But cheer thee, old fiend! Donal's chieftainship will little avail him, when the Rod is yours and the election too!"

"Think you the gentlemen are for me?"

"Ay! truly are they, and for none else. As for Donal, scarce one of them would acknowledge him,—it was foul shame, they say, to all the sept, to have a base-born churl for MacCarthy More, even though the MacCarthy blood be in his veins by the father's side. An' that be the stuff O'Neil makes captains and chiefs of, his following of lords and gentlemen will be but small. How found you Lady Ellen and the children?"

"As yet I have not seen them. I hear Ellen hath had a gay time in Cork, lately, among the English there; and they tell me she has worse to say than any one concerning '*the rebels*,'"—there was a significance in his way of pronouncing the last words that O'Sullivan well understood.

"She is not as prudent as we might wish," said

the Kerry chieftain, shaking his head gravely, "and I fear," lowering his voice, "that she is over-much with the English dames. Such company is neither for your good nor hers, MacCarthy More that will soon be!—an' you have secrets, my good friend, I pray you, keep them from your fair lady-wife!"

Florence started, colored, and looked with keen scrutiny into O'Sullivan's face; what he saw there brought an angry flush to his brow, and he muttered to himself—"I feared as much—God help us all this day!" There was a moment's silence, then MacCarthy spoke again, in his usual tone; self-control never cost him much.

"But, prithce, tell me, Owen! how fares it with our young cousin of Desmond, James Fitz Thomas?"

"Excellently well; he hath no less than eight thousand men together, in the Limerick mountains, ready to join O'Neil at his coming into Munster, the which is daily looked for."

"I hear that Dermot O'Connor hath come out of Connaught with a large force, and that all the Lacys and some of the Burkes are out."

"It is even so, they are with the Earl now. In sooth, the whole province waiteth but for the northern clans to rise as one man. What do you purpose doing?"

"I purpose recovering my country first of all," said Florence with his peculiar smile; "the Queen and her ministers seem to think that I can do more to keep Munster quiet than any man in it. Hence hath my

twelve years' imprisonment been brought to an end. But before I can bring the country over to *loyal sentiments* and the ways of English 'civility'—this was said with a contemptuous curl of the lip—"I must needs have the power as well as the will."

"How will O'Neil take your assumption of the chieftainship?"

"Passing well I warrant you!—See if he do not! I purpose visiting him and Desmond before I am many days older."

"You dare not, Florence!—it were as much as even your life were worth!"

Florence MacCarthy laughed in his own peculiar way. "Owen O'Sullivan, you are a wise man, yet there be things you do not understand. I have got permission to hold parley with the rebels—in furtherance of the Queen's gracious designs for the civilizing and pacifying of this country."

"Florence, you are too deep for my poor wits," said O'Sullivan, evidently puzzled. "I pray God you may bring your designs to a favorable issue!"

The entrance of O'Sullivan's wife, anxious to see her brother, put a stop to the conversation. Before Florence left Dunkerrin, an hour later, he startled O'Sullivan by the information that the Earl of Essex was coming over from England with an army of 16,000 foot and 2,000 horse. "So you see, Owen," he added, "it behoveth all to look to their arms, whichever side they follow."

"Why not tell me that sooner?" said O'Sullivan much amazed.

"Ill news ever come soon enough," replied Florence calmly.

"Nevertheless, keep up your courage, and hold yourself in readiness with the Ro<sup>l</sup>, when once I have got the needful authority to take it, and all will go well,—I promise you that, who never yet deceived you!"

"I will hope for the best, Florence!—but I pray you be on your guard, for these are perilous times! Heard you of the death of Sir Thomas Norreys?"

"Marry, I did; he fell, I was told, in a petty skirmish, fell without his fame. Well! there may a worse man come in his place."

When Florence reached his home he found his children, four bright, rosy boys,—but his wife, he did not find; she was still in Cork, where the festivities given in honor of Essex and his army were just at their height. His indignation was so great that he would not have her apprised of his coming, and before they met, all Ireland, and England, too, were startled by events that even the most sagacious could not have foreseen. Florence MacCarthy, knowing that he could do little for the expulsion of Donal without being formally invested with the title, and knowing, too, that failing the Queen's consent he could not openly assume it without hazarding the loss of all he had gained, made application to the Commissioners, Sir H. Power and Sir Warham St.

Leger, who had been appointed to rule Munster instead of the Vice-President lately deceased. Now Sir Warham was his enemy of old time, but so skillfully did Florence state his case that he succeeded in convincing the stern old Trojan and his colleague that the pacification of Munster depended on his taking the old sept title of MacCarthy More, now usurped by his wife's base brother. He finally prevailed upon the Commissioners to write a joint letter to Sir Robert Cecil, giving it as their opinion that unless the Queen so far condescended to the barbarous ways of the Irishry, Florence might as well have been kept in London. "And so for the title of MacCarthy," they wrote, "(which the bastard Donal doth now usurp, withholding thereby the country,) we also think it agreeable to policy, to the end that he might the rather induce the country-people to forsake the rebels (which no doubt by this means they will), to grace him with the title of MacCarthy, whereby he shall be the better enabled both to obtain and defend that country."

Yet not all these representations could induce the tyrant Queen of England to allow Florence to assume the obnoxious title. Had it been the English earldom he coveted, Elizabeth would have been easily prevailed upon to grant him the renewal of it, buried as it was in the grave of Earl Donald in Mucruss Abbey,—but the title of Earl of Clancarthy was to him nothing, that of MacCarthy More everything. The burning wish of his deep heart was to

rule as an Irish chieftain, a prince,—as the MacCarthy was of old. He had heard of the great northern chieftain casting aside, as a worn-out garment, the queen's title of Earl of Tyrone, and proudly assuming the hereditary one of O'NEIL,—the toparch of Tyrconnell was still O'DONNEL,—even so would he, one of the two great Munster chieftains, be MACCARTHY, and nothing else. That was his dream by night, his hope by day, but beyond that dignity stretched a golden vista, ending in *Irish independence*, in total separation from the England that had been from the first a harsh stepmother to Ireland,—in close connection with Catholic Spain and “eternal Rome!” Did any one, of all his Catholic contemporaries, rightly understand Florence MacCarthy? did even one give him credit for the good intentions, the noble aspirations that underlay all the circuitous workings of his capacious mind?

About these days, Florence and his wife must have made up their quarrel, if quarrel they had, and Lady Ellen MacCarthy must have embarked in a new career, for we find her husband writing to Sir Robert Cecil that his wife was defending one of her fortresses, “Castle Lough of the MacCarthys,” in the Lower Lake of Killarney, against her base brother. And gallantly the castle was defended, but it fell at length into the hands of the wild captain of “loose swords,” who now called himself MacCarthy More.

Donal had, in truth, been reaping honors of late that entitled him to real distinction. He it was

who, with his own followers and his Connaughtmen, had first humbled the proud crest of the gallant Essex in the ever-memorable Pass of Plumes, what time the brilliant favorite was marching with the flower of his army to put down the Munster rebels ! The royal troops had driven Donal and his ill-disciplined hordes before them into the woods and fens of a region where it would have been hard to follow them. But it so happened that the Earl, knowing nothing of their whereabouts, on his march back to Dublin after his solitary feat of taking Cahir Castle and driving off a prey of cows, fell into an ambush formed in a narrow and woody defile by Donal MacCarthy, with some of the O'Mores and the Geraldines, Donal, however, being the leader. The brilliant crowd of plumed cavaliers who accompanied Essex, including many scions of the first families of England, and who, on that day, fell like sheep beneath the vengeful blows of the men of Munster, caused the place of slaughter to be named ever after the "Gap of Feathers," or more commonly the "Pass of Plumes."

This achievement, which gave Donal a *prestige* amongst the national party, and increased his natural boldness by many degrees, nothing discouraged Florence ; he knew that the gentlemen of the sept were with him, and that O'Sullivan was keeping the rod of supremacy till he could take it with the Queen's sanction. Meanwhile he availed himself of the permission he had received to parley with the rebels.

It was in the romantic wilds of Drishane, in the county of Cork, that the young Earl of Desmond, commonly called the Sugaun Earl, lay then encamped with some twelve hundred of his men; true Geraldine that he was, he had with him the venerable Bishop McCreagh and Father Dermot, a priest of some distinction. Florence's own account of the night he spent in his cousin's camp is both curious and interesting. For all in the camp there were just two beds, one of which was given to the Bishop and the priest; the other being for the young Earl, he invited Florence to share it with him, after they had all supped on "beef and water," "the only meals they ever had," quaintly said Florence.

The long consultation which then and there took place was possibly somewhat different in its nature from that which Elizabeth or her ministers anticipated in the authorized "parley with the rebels." Long and earnest it was; very warm on the side of James of Desmond; cool and cautious, as usual, on that of Florence. After a while, the Bishop was summoned to take part in the conference, and then the voices of all three sank to a lower tone, and even the impetuous young Geraldine became subdued and calm. Florence's rhetoric appeared to have a wonderful effect in taming down these determined rebels. That, however, was nothing new,—the man whose smooth, fair speech had ere now charmed the evil spirit out of Elizabeth Tudor, and made even the keenest of English statesmen see things, at times, in such

wise as it suited him to represent them, could have little difficulty in persuading James Fitz Thomas, his own kinsman, that he was not so much the Queen's friend as his, and that only a favorable opportunity was wanting for him to prove his true sentiments. Whatever were the representations made by Florence to his rebel kinsman, and whatever effect they might have had on the Queen's cause, it is certain that the "parley" between the cousins was very beneficial to Florence, for in twenty-four hours after it ended, there was not a "bonnie" nor any other rebel soldier to be seen in the whole country of Carbery; as if by magic the large Geraldine force that had been living at free quarters on the tenants of Florence MacCarthy, all at once disappeared from his lands.— But where, of all places, should they turn up again, but in the barony of Ibawne, belonging to Florence's old enemy and constant maligner, the Lord Barry of Buttevant, who forthwith sent off complaints to Cork, and Dublin, and London, that Florence MacCarthy, by his traitorous dealings with the rebels, had wrought him this evil, and maliciously persuaded his cousin, the traitor Fitz Thomas, to send his rebel hordes to spoil his lands and harry his tenants. But complain as he might in Ibawne the rebels remained so long as there was cow, or calf, or sheep to kill, or provisions of any kind to be had. This was bad and very bad, and fierce was the anger of loyal "David Buttevant," but worse things were to come upon David, and angrier still he had cause to be.

Florence MacCarthy had by this time taken up his abode in the old Castle of Kinsale, the acquisition of which years before had excited the suspicions of Elizabeth's officials in Ireland. There, with his wife and children, he made his home, much to the annoyance of Lady Ellen, who had no fondness for the sea, and could nowise understand why her husband should prefer that lone sea-washed fortress of the De Courceys to any of her castles in romantic Desmond, or his own in fertile Carbery, amid softly-swelling hills and verdant meads and silvery streams. So disgusted was the fair lady of Clancarthy with her husband's singular choice of a dwelling, that most of her time was spent with her mother at Killarney,—Florence had sternly forbidden the visits to her English friends in Cork, and, with all her faults, and, truth to tell, they grew more as she grew older,—Lady Ellen MacCarthy was too much of a Catholic to set her husband's will at defiance, or separate in anger any length of time from the man to whom she had plighted her faith before God's altar, where the dead were around, the dead of her race and his. Weak and vain she had become, but her home-ties were still strong, and she knew and felt what was due to her mother's commands, as well as her husband's.

Lady Ellen was at home, and sitting one evening pensively watching the shadows gathering over the crested sea-wave, Florence standing in the recess of a neighboring window, lost in thought as he often was,—perhaps musing sadly on the fate that had

given him for wife one who, however fair to look upon, was no helpmate to such as he. All at once a courier was announced, and Florence, starting from his *reverie*, hastened to the outer hall to meet him. Listless as his wife sometimes was, of late years, she was even nervously anxious in matters where her own and her family's interests might be at stake, and she awaited her husband's return that evening with a restless impatience that made her start at times from her seat and pace the room with a hurried step.

When Florence re-appeared his cheek was flushed and his eyes were lit up as his wife had not seen them for years long.

"Florence!" she said, laying her hand on his arm as they both stood in the fading light by the window where Ellen had been sitting. "Florence! what tidings hath he brought?"

A change passed over the husband's face at the sound of the light, musical voice. Some undefinable emotion was visible on the face which the stern law of necessity had schooled into habitual dissimulation; a struggle might be plainly seen, the struggle of a heart that would fain confide in one it ought to love, but feared to do so; then Florence MacCarthy said in the uncertain tones of one who knew not how the tidings he announced might be received—"Another defeat hath the Queen's troops sustained."

"Where? how, Florence?" cried Lady Ellen eagerly.

"In the Curlew Mountains, in O'Rourke's country.

Sir Conyers Clifford, Governor of Connaught, was marching, by the orders of Lord Essex, against the northern rebels at Belleek, with over two thousand men, horse and foot, when, in the heart of the Curlew Mountains, he was suddenly attacked by the O'Rourkes and some of their friends, and after a sharp contest, the royal forces were utterly routed, Sir Conyers and many of his officers slain, and full twenty-five banners, with a large quantity of arms and ammunition, and other stores, fell into the hands of the—the enemy. Clifford's head was cut off, and sent to O'Rourke to Drumahaire Castle."

A cry of horror escaped Lady Ellen. "A gracious gift, truly, for the noble Lord of Breffny!"

"A welcomer one than you think, Ellen, it may have been," said Florence with emphasis.

"What mean you, Florence?"

"Heard you never, or have you forgotten, that Brian O'Rourke, this young chieftain's father, was hung on Tyburn Hill, partly for sheltering shipwrecked Spaniards from the ill-fated Armada, partly for some indignity offered to Queen Elizabeth's picture a little before. His head was spiked on London Bridge, just fourteen years ago, and I fear this disaster is mainly owing to the vengeance of the O'Rourkes."

"It may be so," said Lady Ellen musingly; then she added, as the hot blood of her race took fire at the possibility of such an insult, "An' it were my father who had been so dealt with by the English, I am no

daughter of ClanCarthy or I would do as the O'Rourkes did, if they set foot in my country!—Take it as you will, Florence, I tell you they should pay the eric with their blood!"

Florence shook his head reprovingly, but there was that in his eyes that made Ellen think he was much of her way of thinking in regard to the battle of the Curlew Mountains,—for a pitched battle it really was, only that the natives had the advantage of knowing their ground, whereas the English did not, and the further one of being well accustomed to mountain, or what is now called *guerilla*, warfare.

Says the biographer of Florence MacCarthy, speaking of this brilliant exploit of the O'Rourkes and their allies in the Curlew Mountains: "Two hundred men slain! as many wounded! Nineteen hundred *old soldiers* scattered and disgraced! for they fled 'in a general rout, throwing away not only their arms, but their very clothes,' and the head of Her Majesty's Governor of Connaught to be spiked upon the battlements of O'Rourke's Castle—as the head of his father had been upon London Bridge—should that barbarous chieftain have the sense to take a lesson of civility from his English neighbors, was the eric taken by the son for the blood of his parent!"

"Irish history abounds in tales of bloody requital like this, for cruelty and insult inflicted by the English conquerors. Savage practical jokes between nations are the costliest of all entertainments! It

was in an evil hour that Bryan O'Rourke dragged the Queen's portrait,—the effigy of that beauty which adorned the world—in the mud! It was in a worse hour, when the Londoners, amused with their pleasant jest of the gad,\* thronged to witness the ignominious death of an insolent barbarian (an Irish prince)! but it was in the worst of all when the tragedy in the Curlews washed out with the blood of several distinguished English officers, and several hundred old soldiers, the shame of that ghastly revel around the Tyburn gibbet!"

\* It excited much mirth amongst the Londoners at the time that this "great Lord of Brenny" petitioned the Queen to allow him to be hung "with a gad, or withy, after the fashion of his own country." This favor was graciously granted, and no less a person than Myler McGrath, first Protestant Archbishop of Cashel, was appointed to administer to his spiritual wants; but the "great Lord of Brenny" not only refused the services of the apostate friar, but gave him in Irish a piece of his mind that was not very flattering to that exalted personage.



## CHAPTER XV.

THE Geraldine forces once gone, "All the approaches into Florence's country, which was 'the back and strength of all Munster,' were instantly closed! What took place from that time forward within the vast and populous territories of MacCarthy More, the English Government had no means of knowing, except by the letters which Florence himself chose to write to Sir Robert Cecil."\*

So carefully had the wily chieftain shut out all strangers from his immense possessions,—even Donal, the nominal MacCarthy More, having gone with all his followers with the rebel army into Barry's country,—so skilfully and so quietly had he strengthened all its borders, that before any notice was taken of his proceedings, both Carbery and Desmond were as sealed books, which not even the keen eyes of her Majesty's officials could penetrate. When too late, this discovery was made by those worthies, and immediately a shower of complaints was sent across the Channel, conveying all manner of suspicions against Florence MacCarthy. Sir George Carew, the new Vice-President of Munster, even wrote that rumor said he was gone into Spain to hasten the coming of Don Juan D'Aquila. Florence might be rustivating on the beautiful banks of Killarney, in

\* Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy More, p. 219.

one of his wife's castles,—or in one of his own in fair Carbery,—he might be looking seaward from his strong fortress by the Old Head of Kinsale—his favorite dwelling of late—or consulting in Madrid with the Spanish king and his ministers,—where he was, or what he was about, was a problem which good Sir George had no means of solving. Failing of anything like certainty, however, he was ready with expedients. He proposed that, in case Florence *was* gone to Spain, the young Earl of Desmond, so long imprisoned in the Tower, should be sent over to Ireland and placed in possession of all the principal castles in MacCarthy's country. This was easily done—on paper,—but to do it in reality would have taken more men than Elizabeth's army in Ireland numbered just then. What with the malicious insinuations and open accusations of Lord Barry, enraged at the ravages of the rebel troops in his country, which he, as usual, attributed to Florence's agency—what with the repeated warnings of Carew, and St. Leger, and the other officials, with the whole confraternity of the Undertakers, it is marvellous that the Queen and her ministers still trusted, or rather pretended to trust, him. Not only was his country closed, as before mentioned, against the English, but it was literally swarming with armed men—hired soldiers from Connaught; his own followers, and even many of those of his cousin, MacCarthy Reagh,—strangest of all, since that chieftain was no friend of Florence, as all *their* world knew.

Strange, indeed, it was that whole tribes of Donal Pipi's most warlike vassals were then in the service of his cousin and Tanist. Whatever the intentions of the latter might be, he was rapidly extending his power, increasing his popularity, and enlarging his means of defence.

Things were in this state in the vast country that called Florence MacCarthy lord, when in the first week of March, in the first year of the seventeenth century, word was brought to the chieftains of Munster that the great Northern rebel was coming at last to visit friend and foe in the southern province. To all of them he wrote in the same terms, that "he would come to learn the intentions of the gentlemen of Munster with regard to the great question of the nation's liberty and religion." To Ormond, the Queen's Lieutenant-General, he tauntingly wrote that "it was his intention presently to journey into Munster, to know the minds of the people of that province; and that he had appointed the Holy Cross, in Tipperary, as the place at which he would meet his friends." In that letter he also undertook to teach politeness to the sternest and proudest Butler that ever ruled in Ormond. "When you next write," said he, "direct your secretary to use the word *Rebel* as seldom as may be."

How the heart of Black Thomas must have swelled within him as he read these bold, defiant words, knowing that they indicated the consciousness of strength and power! Too well stern Ormond knew

that he, at least, had no sufficient force to sustain his high-sounding title of Lieutenant-General against the fast-growing power of this haughty northern chieftain. As for the brilliant army that Essex had brought over from England, it had never recovered the day of the Pass of Plumes, and another defeat, almost as bloody, from the O'Byrnes of Wicklow amongst their own beautiful mountains; crest-fallen and shattered, the remains of that army was keeping garrison in Dublin, guarding the precious bodies of the cowardly Lords Justices, their gallant but imprudent leader, after his memorable interview with O'Neil near Dundalk, having betaken himself to England! Lord Ormond, then, had only himself and the troops he immediately commanded to depend upon. But the stern old man, ever strong and self-reliant, braced himself up for the work before him.

O'Neil, on his part, kept his word. He "met his friends" near Holy Cross Abbey, and knelt a pilgrim at the glorious shrine where in ages past,—before the new religion came to rob the old—

"—from matins to midnight the censers were swaying,  
And from matins to midnight the people were praying;  
As a thousand Cistercians incessantly raised  
Hosannas round shrines that with jewelry blazed;  
While the palmer from Syria—the pilgrim from Spain,  
Brought their off'rings alike to the far-honor'd fane!"

How the sight of the desolation that had even then come upon the holy place must have roused his ire against the foreign oppressor who had in the name of a new religion plundered and desecrated the

shrines of his country, and covered the fair land with the ruins of its former greatness ! How he must have longed for the hour, which already he saw in no far distance, when the stranger and the spoiler should be driven from the lands of which they had robbed the Irish Church, and the monastic abodes of Ireland rise again in their olden splendor to give rest and shelter to the Religious so long banished by penal edicts from the once peaceful land of Patrick, of Bridget, of Columba !

But O'Neil was wary, and knew well how to bide his time. He had sent the main part of his forces in another direction, to assist friends and punish enemies, especially those of Irish blood and the old faith, who might refuse to join the national cause. He had himself gone out of his way to visit Holy Cross, and confer there with the chiefs of North Munster, nearly all of whom had declared their willingness to take sides with him. There it was that he was joined by the young Earl of Desmond, and a right cordial one the meeting was, and the pledge of loyal service to each other and the national cause, exchanged between them before the ruined shrine of Holy Cross was never broken—not Hugh O'Neil himself was more uniformly true to the cause of faith and country than was James Fitz Thomas on to the tragic end.

O'Neil had sent word, before his coming, that he would visit with fire and sword and swift destruction all who held out for the Queen of England, and he sternly kept his word !—The track of his army

was marked by the blazing homesteads of the English Undertakers,—the new owners of Irish confiscated lands,—and of those Irish lords and gentlemen—they were but few—who refused to make common cause with him. Of this number was the Lord Barry, whom neither threats nor persuasions could induce to embark in the cause of his countrymen and co-religionists. O'Neil had written him with his own hand, and so, too, had Bishop McCreagh, the Catholic bishop of Cork diocese—a prelate whose head, like the other priests and bishops of the Irish Church in those dark days, was only safe on his shoulders when under the protection of Irish pikes and bayonets. The bishop had even threatened Barry with excommunication if he continued to take sides with the spoilers of his race, the persecutors of his religion. But David was not to be moved from his allegiance to her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, and so he plainly informed those who would have persuaded him to declare for faith and country.

“The consequence be on his own head!” then said Hugh O'Neil; “his father's son ought to know better than trust the common enemy.”\* So the red tide of ruin rolled on like an avalanche into Barry's country, sweeping all before it,—towns,—villages,—farms, cattle, grain—everything,—human life alone was spared,—and loyal Lord Barry was left to solve

\* The father of this David was with the Great Rebel Earl of Desmond all through his rebellion, fell when he fell, and finally died in prison. David himself, then a youth, also bore arms in Desmond's army.

at his leisure the problem whether Queen Elizabeth's favor or Hugh O'Neil's was of most value at that particular time—in that particular country. Small compensation was the royal lady likely to make David Barry for all he lost by his singular freak of "loyalty."

Florence MacCarthy, like David Barry, and all the other lords and gentlemen of the old faith, received one of Tyrone's remarkable circulars inviting him to venture all for faith and fatherland, and to lend what aid he could to the national cause. Unlike Barry of Buttevant, the Tanist of Carbery repaired at once to O'Neil's camp, where he was received with acclamation by all the nobles and chiefs, and bishops and priests there assembled. Very kind and very cordial was the great Northern Earl's reception of one whom he well knew united, in his own person, the principal branches of the proud Clan Caura. And Florence, contrary to his usual custom, was as frank and free as any.

"Welcome, Tanist of Carbery!" said O'Neil, shaking him by both hands; "welcome son-in-law and heir of Clancarthy!—welcome, Lord of Desmond yet to be!"

"Lord of Desmond am I now, in spite of mine enemies," said Florence pleasantly, "but not MacCarthy More—thanks to my Lord of Tyrone!"

"Tyronne me no Tyrone!" said the hot-tempered chief of the Kinel-Owen; "O'NEIL am I now—nothing more, nothing less!"

"Even so would I be MACCARTHY," said Florence very composedly but with perfect good humor; "the following is mine, the lands are mine,—I tell you, Hugh O'Neil, the title and the chieftry must be mine, too, ere I take part in this action. Donal hath never had aught besides the name—O'Sullivan More, my brother-in-law, would never consent to give the Rod to such as he and hath reserved it for me whom all the Sept doth look upon as the true and only MacCarthy More;—the gentlemen all refuse to follow Donal, or acknowledge him as their chief,—me they will have and none other as head of the Sept. An' I stake land and life in this business, it must be as MacCarthy More, otherwise my aid were of small avail to the good cause."

O'Neil was just the man to see at a glance the difference between this noble-looking, fair-spoken gentleman, skilled like himself in the ways of courts, understanding thoroughly his own people and those who had made themselves their masters, speaking the tongue of the stranger as fluently as his own,—and the boorish, untutored Donal, who had nothing to recommend him but the fiery valor which the meanest clansman in all Desmond might have as well. Then Florence MacCarthy was Tanist to MacCarthy Reagh's country,—lord of fair Carbery, and son-in-law of the Earl of Clancarthy—in all respects one of the foremost lords in Munster, connected by blood with all the chief houses,—whereas Donal was simply Donal the outlaw, Donal the base, of whom all Munster could not make a gentleman.

"Florence," said the politic Earl, in his blandest tones, "Donal had never been made MacCarthy More by me, had you been here, but you being detained in England, and not knowing for how long, it behoved us to have a MacCarthy More. Now that we can have a better one, there is nothing done but can be undone. What say you, my Lord of Desmond, and friends all! shall Florence MacDonogh, Tanist of Carbery, be MacCarthy More?"

All present, with one accord, answered in the affirmative, and Donal's vehement opposition was of small avail where all were against him. Might was right in those days, but in that case Florence had undoubtedly the right as well as the might.

It was a proud day, the proudest of Florence MacCarthy's life, when in the national camp, surrounded by the chief men of his race, in presence of the accomplished representative of the Northern Hy-Nial princes, and with the full consent of all, he received from the hand of his faithful friend, O'Sullivan More, the White Rod, which was verily and indeed the sceptre of a noble principality—the same which his fathers had ruled right royally for many an age. There was a flush on his dark face, and a proud exultation in his usually calm eyes as he took the emblem of so much power; and when he spoke his thanks for the great honor and dignity bestowed upon him, there was a tremor in his voice that told of strong and deep emotion.

And truly the scene was one to impress even a less

interested spectator, especially one of the old race and the ancient faith. The inauguration was accompanied with solemn and symbolical rites that carried the mind back to the night of time, to the days of the first MacCarthy who ruled in Desmond,—back to times long anterior to the Christian era, while others were used that belonged to the newer and holier dispensation. By the pagan rite, or rather custom, being purely matter of *etiquette*, was the chief installed into office; by the Christian rite he was blessed,—both imposing in their kind. And they who stood around, truly no nobler company had Ireland seen together in the later times; no more truly national assembly had met on Irish soil since the last *feis* at Tara, ages before. There were seen Eugenic chiefs from South Munster, and Dalcassians from Thomond and Ormond and Ossory; mail-clad Norman-Irish from all the provinces except Ulster—then and for some years after the home of the old Irish alone; and finally the stalwart sons of the North, O'Rourkes and O'Reillys from either Breffny, MacMahons from Uriel, Maguires from Fermanagh, Magennises from Down, O'Neils and O'Donnells from Tyrowen and Tyrconnell, O'Doghertys and O'Cahans from the farthest north, and O'Farrells from the fertile plains of Annaly; and venerable ecclesiastics were there, one bishop and several priests,—men whose emaciated forms and weather-bronzed faces told of much suffering and privation, and, too, of much travel,—amongst these grave and learned men were

representatives of more than one of the Religious Orders,—in sooth, a right noble company! But chief amongst them all was conspicuous the great Northern Earl, the conqueror of the Blackwater side, the head, and heart, and soul of the national party, his clear blue eyes as yet undimmed by the mist of age, his stout, square-built form still erect in the prime of manhood's strength. By his side stood James Fitz Thomas, O'Neil's Earl of Desmond, a young man of handsome aspect, and of bearing befitting his high lineage.

Such was the assemblage, such the scene in that camp on the banks of the Maine river in Cork County, in that hour when Florence MacCarthy was invested with the style and dignity of MacCarthy More by the free election of his Sept, and with the unanimous concurrence of all the principal lords and gentlemen of the Irish race! Well for him had he died that hour!

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

A month had not passed after the inauguration of Florence MacCarthy, when his professions of loyalty to the English interest were put to the test in a way he little expected. O'Neil had gone home to the north to meet Essex\* near Dundalk, and then to rejoin his friend, Hugh Roe O'Donnell. That gallant young chieftain was busy organising troops

\* This famous conference between the Irish Earl of Tyrone and the English Earl of Essex is one of the memorable historic incidents of that time,—the result of it was that Essex took French leave of his army and hurried off to England.

and mustering the clans in far Tyrconnel, preparing for one of his headlong charges on the English and their Irish friends in Connaught; O'Neil had, by a skilful stratagem, avoided meeting Ormond in Tipperary, well knowing that the army he had then at command was not such as he could lead against the tried soldiers of the Queen's Lieutenant-General. He had gone to Holy Cross, as he told Ormond he would, and had there met and conferred with his friends in that section of the country; but to fight the Queen's forces was not his programme just then, so he quietly slipped away by night, leaving his watch-fires burning, and left the chafed and mortified old royalist general to retrace his steps back whence he came.

O'Neil had left behind him a considerable force of Connaughtmen, commanded by Dermot O'Connor, brother-in-law of the Earl of Thomond, and these troops were placed at the disposal of Florence MacCarthy,—so rumor said, and so it seemed from what followed soon after.

Immediately after his memorable visit to O'Neil's camp, the wily Tanist of Carbery wrote in all haste to London and to Cork an account of his "parley with the rebels,"—how he had endeavored to persuade Tyrone and Desmond and the others to return to their allegiance to so good a sovereign; how he found them unwilling to give up their treasonable courses, but had prevailed on them to withdraw their troops out of Carbery and Desmond, that is to say,

his own and his wife's country, which he would now hold loyally for the Queen's highness. He complained, however, that the rebel leaders would not consent to withdraw their marauding bands from his territories unless he took upon him the name of MacCarthy More, he being, in right of his wife, better entitled to the same than the base-born Denal. In that matter he was forced to yield, he said, hoping thereby to get rid of such troublesome company, and, by clearing his country of them, to do a service to her Majesty!

Her Majesty, it is to be feared, saw his acceptance of the obnoxious title in a different light, and recognized in it no very great proof of his desire to "do her a service." But seeing that her general in Ireland had no troops to spare for the defence of so vast a tract of country as that which Florence MacCarthy now ruled, she was fain to make a show of trusting him, so long as he remained neutral. Even that was much in a chieftain so powerful as the now recognized head of the whole Clan Carthy, at a time when nearly the whole country was either in actual rebellion, or ready to rise at any moment.

But the royal officers and officials in Ireland placed even less confidence in Florence than did their Queen. Broad hints and even open charges of treasonable doings going on in the remote parts of his vast country,—of continued negotiations with Spain and other Catholic nations,—were continually being sent over to England,—the corps of accusers being headed, as

usual, by Lord Barry, now more wrathful than ever, and blaming his old enemy, Florence MacCarthy, for all the woes that had come upon him.

Things were in this state, Florence keeping his country in perfect quiet, which the Queen and Government believed, or appeared to believe, loyal service, and which it was undoubtedly their interest to perpetuate, when on a day, to the horror and dismay of the peaceable inhabitants, a strong detachment of British troops was sent into Carbery, burning and destroying everything that came in their way, and even slaying the unarmed country people whom they styled in their dispatches "churls and poor people," boasting that they "left not one grain of corn within ten miles of their way wherever they marched;" on through Carbery they marched—two English captains with their companies,—on into O'Donovan's country,\* carrying destruction wherever they went, and amongst other savage depredations, burning the castle of Florence's foster-brother, and a quantity of corn belonging to his own brother, the gallant Dermot Moyle, who was then with the so-called rebel army. But Florence was not "with the rebels," and his country was under royal "protection;" what then was his indignation when he saw, for the first time, his peaceful possessions ravaged by an armed force, and his people slain in cold blood; after all his endeavors, and hitherto successful endeavors, to keep

\* O'Donovan was one of the principal chiefs of MacCarthy Reagh's country.

the red tide of war beyond his borders. It would scarce have lessened his indignation had he known that this unwarrantable outrage was committed by order of Sir Henry Power, who was about leaving the province, and for no other reason but that he had, as he wrote to England, "conceived a doubt of Florence MacCarthy's loyalty!" Those were the men who represented Queen Elizabeth in Ireland!

For once in his life, Florence MacCarthy was roused to decisive action. The blood of his Milesian fathers boiled in his veins; without waiting even for the arrival of O'Neil's troops, for whom he at once sent to another part of his country, he hastily dispatched some of his own followers in pursuit of the invaders, whom they overtook, just as they had crossed the Bandon river; a fierce skirmish ensued, in which some slight loss was sustained on both sides, but still the destroyers swept on spreading ruin and death as they went.

Their devastations were speedily brought to a close. Before they knew what was coming, they found themselves between Dermot O'Connor with his thousand Connaughtmen, and Florence MacCarthy with almost as many of his own clansmen. The English being in strength, they managed to retreat from their rather awkward position, and commenced to retreat towards Kinsale, closely pursued by the Irish, and keeping up a running fire as they went.

The English succeeded, however, in throwing a

garrison into Kinsale, but, having received orders to hasten towards Cork, they set out in good order, 500 foot and 60 horse, making a gallant show, no doubt, as their helmets and arms glittered in the sun. They had traversed about half the distance between Kinsale and Cork, when, in descending a hill, the officer in command of the horse ordered a halt to reconnoitre the dangerous ground that lay before them. Right in front rolled a deep and rapid river, spanned by a narrow bridge—on either side bogs and woods—truly an encouraging prospect for the warriors of Elizabeth, strange as the country was to them; but worse than the bridge and the river, the bogs and the woods, was seen by the British. The sun was shining full on the plain, and its rays flashed back from glittering objects under the tall ferns and the low brushwood, which the practised eyes of the horsemen soon recognized as steel morions, and pikes, and bayonets! The word soon flew like lightning along the line—the Irish were there in ambush! The scouts had passed and repassed the bridge without perceiving them, as they lay flat on the ground, covered over with their native fern, “the Irish hill-fern;” but the sun shone out and from the hill-side above, the gleaming weapons and the steel morions\* were visible through the leafy cover. Not knowing

\* That the Irish soldiers, or some of them, at least, wore these cap-shaped helmets, is proved by the fact that some of the officials, writing to Cecil of this very encounter, state expressly that they discovered the ambush by reason of “the sun shining on their morions.”

what force might be there concealed, the English retreated, seeing which the Irish rushed from their place of concealment, and, to the cries of "MacCarthy forever!"—"O'Connor aboo!" charged furiously on the invaders, led on, in two bodies, by Dermot O'Connor and Florence MacCarthy.

The fight that followed was fierce and bloody; many fell on both sides, and Captain Flower, the English commander, was amongst the wounded; so fiery was the vengeful attack of the MacCarthys and their allies, that the English did not long stand their ground, but retreated fighting, their foot protected by their cavalry, the Irish pressing them harder and harder. As their good fate had it, there was a small castle about a quarter of a mile from the scene of action, and this they managed to gain, the horse keeping a bold front to the pursuers, while the main body entered the castle.

So fierce was the pursuit of the avengers of their own and their kindred's wrongs, that even the English officers in command were forced to admit in their dispatches that, had not that castle been so near, matters would have gone hard with them; as it was, their loss was sufficient to make them feel that even "churls and poor people" might be revenged.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## CONCLUSION.

NOTHING can better illustrate the wonderfully clever mind of Florence MacCarthy and his boundless powers of persuasion than the fact that he managed to escape the censures of the Government and the anger of the Queen after this open and in part successful attack on her Majesty's troops, which it was hoped by his enemies, and feared by his friends, would be his utter ruin. Yet he plainly told Sir Robert Cecil, that he was only sorry he did not catch either of the English captains, for that if he had, he would certainly have hanged them both!—He knew his power at the time, and was well aware that there was nothing Elizabeth and her ministers dreaded more than a rupture with him. But still from that time forward he never trusted himself in the hands of the English, never emerged from the fastnesses of his country, or entered a walled town without a written protection. Only *once* he forgot his habitual distrust of the English, and that once was his ruin.

It was immediately after Florence's gallant exploit in revenge for the slaughter of his people, and the spoliation of his lands, that Sir Henry Power, the author of the outrage, was removed from

Munster, and a much abler and more politic man was made President of Munster. This was Sir George Carew, the man who, of all others, had most to do in defeating the life-long projects of the new MacCarthy More, and undermining the proud elevation which he had at length attained. One of the ablest Englishmen ever sent in those stormy days to fleece the Irish and keep them in subjection, Sir George Carew was also one of the most unscrupulous. As no device was beyond his cunning, so none was too wicked, too utterly base to be used by him at need. This Florence MacCarthy, like many others, found to his cost. He had now to deal with a man as able as himself, as far-reaching and as far-seeing, but alas! without any of those conscientious scruples that, as a Catholic, restrained Florence MacCarthy within certain limitations.

The position in which our hero found himself at this time was one that called into play all the powers of his versatile and singularly gifted mind. He was, to use a hackneyed phrase, between two fires; on the one hand, O'Neil and Desmond were urging him to throw off the ignoble mask under which he concealed his real sentiments, and boldly declare for faith and country; the Government, and especially Carew, was, on the other hand, vehemently insisting on his breaking with the rebels, and lending his powerful aid to crush them, as beseemed one so highly favored, or so they said, by his liege lady, Elizabeth. Then at home there was his wife reproaching him with his

"underhand plotting"—and doing her little best to induce him to join the royalists once for all.

His tried friend, O'Sullivan More, had gone as a hostage for him to O'Neil, and was detained in the North so much beyond the time stipulated that he grew impatient, and began at length to blame Florence for the temporizing and vacillating conduct that had left him a prisoner, far away from home and friends—and neglected, it would seem, by the very man for whose sake he had placed himself in thrall.

Yet still Florence hesitated, neither joining one party nor the other, but keeping himself out of harm's way in the depths of his own wild country of Desmond, his castles filled with armed men, and his borders on a war footing. Meanwhile the fierce struggle was raging north and south; O'Neil had conquered Bagnal at the Yellow Ford and Clontibret; he and O'Donnel had well nigh cleared the North of the Queen's mercenaries; Desmond, his faithful ally, was for some time successful in the South, but after a while his resources failed, and he found it hard to maintain his ground. Then it was—when the Northern chieftains felt the necessity of effecting a simultaneous rising in the South, that they called indignantly on MacCarthy More to hoist at once the standard of revolt and call his chieftains and his people to arise and revenge the wrongs of ages. Then it was, too, that James Fitz Thomas besieged him with letters of earnest supplication, depicting in moving terms the straits to which he was

reduced, and imploring him, for the sake of the cause that ought to be equally dear to both, to come to his assistance. He was not to be moved from the neutral ground he occupied, and so made friends of neither party. A fatal error this was, and a sad verification of the old adage that too much caution defeats its own end. Only a little while before, Carew wrote to London that "the entire province was disaffected; with sufficient worldly wisdom the great Lords continued subjects in show, but their followers were in action with Fitz Thomas; the walled towns were corrupted; and the open country was wholly in possession of the Geraldines, and shut against the Queen's loyal subjects."

During that brief season when "the open country" was "in possession of the Geraldines;" when "the walled towns were corrupted," that is to say, gained over to the national party,—when Lieutenant-General Lord Ormond, with his friend, the Earl of Thomond, (the *loyal* head of the O'Briens!) were captured by Owen O'More, the dashing chief of that gallant Sept, with a few of his followers,—and was only liberated after much negotiation and sundry concessions made to the Catholic army; when the glorious northern chiefs were sweeping all before them, and making Elizabeth tremble for her "realm of Ireland;" when aid was constantly expected from Spain and Rome and other Catholic nations; when the English interest in Ireland was deemed of all men in most imminent peril, and when a little more success would have

emboldened all the Catholic Irish, old and new, to join hands for God and native land, and hurl defiance in the face of haughty England,—had Florence MacCarthy More *then* cast off the mask and thrown himself and his thousands of followers into the national cause, all might yet be well, and Ireland might have been loosened once for all from the cruel chain of bondage. Well for him, well for Ireland, had he at that critical moment of his country's history adopted a bolder and more honest course, and followed the instincts of his truer and better nature! But he did not, and soon, very soon, the opportunity had passed and forever—at least for him. O'Neil's good fortune was at last deserting him, and his star was paling before that of Elizabeth's new Lord Deputy, Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy. Dark ruin was impending over the great Earl, and his ruin involved that of his truest Munster ally, the Earl of Desmond. O'Neil, in his last efforts to maintain his ground against Mountjoy, was forced to withdraw all the troops he had left in Munster, and the gallant young Geraldine saw himself left to his own resources, which were becoming daily less,—alas! treachery was at work undermining the very foundations of his too short-lived prosperity. A brief episode of the history of his brave but unsuccessful struggle to have and to hold his grandfather's title and possessions is too characteristic of the times to be passed over without mention in this brief historical sketch of the fortunes of an Irish chief:

The reader will scarce have forgotten the young Geraldine lord whom we in the course of this veracious narrative introduced to his notice as a prisoner in the Tower of London. Well! when his cousin, James Fitz Thomas, seemed likely, with the aid of his powerful ally, O'Neil, to wrest not only his earldom, but, perchance, all Ireland from English rule, Elizabeth and her ministers devised a plan for his undoing which they thought could not fail to effect that most desirable result. In pursuance of this plan, the Tower Earl, as that hapless scion of a noble race is usually styled,—was dressed up in such garments as befitted his rank, and sent over to Ireland under the tutelage of no less a person than the apostate Myler McGrath, the Queen's Archbishop of Cashel, with one or two other loyal gentlemen, ostensibly as attendants on the high-born son of the Count Palatine of Desmond, in reality as spies on his actions, lest he, too, following the rebellious instincts of his race, might fall into the evil courses of his cousin! The hope was that this young nobleman, being the son of the late Earl, whose memory was still dear to all Munster, would be able to draw off the people of his father's Palatinate from the cousin who had no such claim. And it seemed at first as though the stratagem was likely to succeed; a thrill of joy ran through the whole country on the news of his arrival, and the people thronged in thousands to Kilmallock Castle to welcome him whom they considered their rightful lord. It was Saturday

night, and all night long the faithful followers of the Geraldine kept crowding into the town, waiting patiently in the streets to get a sight of the Earl when he came forth. And truly his appearance next morning was greeted with the wildest enthusiasm; even the housetops were crowded with eager watchers, and such a cheer went up from the mighty multitude, as the young lord appeared on the threshold of his father's door, as had never been heard in the old Geraldine town. According to the ancient custom, salt and wheat were thrown on the representative of the country's ancient lords, in token of good will, and, amid fervent blessings and cries of "Shannid Aboo!"\*—"the Geraldine forever!" he passed on with his melancholy smile, bowing graciously on every side.

A few minutes more and the blessings and prayers, and joyful acclamations had changed to hootings and execrations. The faithful followers of the Catholic Geraldines, many of whom had fought for the faith under the late Earl, had the grief and mortification of seeing the young Earl accompany Myler McGrath and the English gentlemen to the Protestant church, and of learning from his attendants that he belonged to the new religion! From that hour there was none to do him homage, and no more notice was taken of him by the vassals of his house than if he were a common kerne! One strong castle

\* The ancient war-cry of the southern Geraldines, from the name of one of their principal castles.

(Castlemaine) had been given up to him by a gentleman of the Fitzgeralds, Thomas Oge by name, but that was all the luckless Tower Earl ever accomplished for the Queen or himself! Some months longer he remained in the country, a melancholy shadow of nobility; his young sisters, the Lady Ellen and Lady Joan Fitzgerald, were allowed to make him a visit in Kilmallock; but his mother, the aged Countess, being a fervent Catholic and the widow of a noted rebel, was deemed too dangerous a character to be allowed to have sight or speech of her only son. That venerable lady had herself fallen under the ban of English justice, for she stood charged with the wicked crime of devising a marriage between her daughter Joan and the young chief of Tyrconnell, the gallant Hugh Roe. An ungrateful heart must the Countess have had so far to forget the benefits she and hers had received from the good Queen Bess! It was clear she did not appreciate the favor done her family by that royal lady in having her noble husband's head sent to her in London, and there preserved on the top of a spike for her own and others' delectation!

Be that as it might, the Queen's Earl of Desmond and his mother never met during the few months he remained in Ireland. And when he returned in disgust to England, he died "within the year,"—the poorest, saddest, of all the Geraldines, that one that grew to manhood in the shadow of the British crown!

But the Queen's Earl of Desmond went to England and died neglected; and soon O'Neil's Earl, the gallant Fitz Thomas, the far worthier scion of the grand old Geraldine tree, left to his own resources, as we have said, by reason of O'Neil's reverses in the north, sank daily into deeper ruin, and was gradually deserted by his followers till only a small band was left him; with these devoted few he wandered here and there, wherever he could hope to find protection and the means of preserving life,—like his uncle, Earl Gerald, before him,—until at last he was betrayed by a wretched kinsman of his own, Fitzgibbon, the White Knight, into the hands of the English rulers, and thrown into prison to await his doom. Yet, unfortunate as he was, his memory ought to be held in honor by those who know how to prize devotion to a great cause, true patriotism, and fidelity to religion.

The "Sugaun Earl" once out of the way, and O'Neil's fortunes fast failing in the north, Sir George Carew exulted in the thought that now he could deal as he wished with Florence MacCarthy, whom before he feared to drive to extremities. That chieftain had been, from his first coming into office, the terror and perplexity of his daily life; his letters to England were all full of "Florence McCartie," whom he said "hung like a thundercloud" over his plans and prospects for what he called "the pacification of Munster."

Yet even then, when the national party he had

so long sustained in his own peculiar way by preserving a show of *armed* neutrality that kept the English authorities in a state of watchful anxiety concerning his movements; when the national party had lost its *prestige*, and O'Neil's great Confederation was rapidly falling to pieces, Florence MacCarthy still kept Carew at bay. Without any actual show of revolt, he managed to maintain that feudal sovereignty in Desmond which had cost him so much toil and trouble to acquire, and left Carew as much in the dark as ever concerning what was passing in those wild regions of the south. Warned by sad experience of the past, he never left his own country, where he lived surrounded by armed followers, without a special "protection" or passport for each visit, signed in the Queen's name. Hitherto, this had been a sufficient security; but the time was coming when it should serve him no longer!

Sir George Carew had tried divers ways of managing this obstinate rebel—for such he and all the English, by that time, deemed him—and little wonder, seeing that, with all his fine promises, he had never done the least thing to advance the English interest since the day he was sent back from England to take possession of his wife's inheritance!

One thing, of all others, Sir George was bent on doing by way of making sure of Florence, and that was to obtain possession of his eldest son as a hostage. But somehow the youth was never given; in that, too, Carew found himself foiled. For many

months Sir George entertained his patrons at Court with his efforts to get possession of the young heir of MacCarthy, and Florence's excuses and breaches of promise. So long as he kept "the sick child" at home, all his promises were of no avail, and Carew was fiercely indignant. But Florence MacCarthy had seen too much of the English manner of treating such hostages to trust his first-born son into the hands of her Majesty's deputies. It was "diamond cut diamond" between the able, unscrupulous President of Munster and the no less able head of the Clan Carthy.

Indignant that he could no longer wile the chieftain into visiting him at Cork, Sir George was in the habit of calling him, amongst other hard names, a coward, but, when indulging in bitter merriment at his expense, he did not think it necessary to state that Florence's "cowardice" was nothing more than what is called "the better part of valor," viz.: discretion. It might have spoiled the joke had he told of a certain bargain he had made some time before with one "John Annys" to *poison Florence MacCarthy!*\* and that it was solely by reason of the chief's caution in keeping within his own country that the President's emissary could not reach him. This fact alone goes far to prove that Florence MacCarthy, so sadly misunderstood by his countrymen

\* See MacCarthy's *Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy More*, p. 10. It is also well ascertained that Carew employed assassins to poison Hugh O'Neil, and to shoot the Sugaun Earl and his brother—all of which attempts happily failed.

then and since, was considered by the Government a most dangerous and incorrigible rebel. Whatever his plans were, they lay so deep beneath the surface, and were prosecuted with such extreme caution, that even the all-piercing eye of Carew could not penetrate them, and could only guess at their nature and extent. Yet his suspicions never slumbered, and watching Florence became the great business of his life.

And *was* Florence the deep plotter the President made him appear? Had he really connections with the Queen's enemies and Ireland's friends beyond seas? That the reader will presently find out. Pass we on now to the one false move which he made in this notable trial of skill, a move that threw the game at last into the hands of his unscrupulous adversary.

The President had sent Florence a more peremptory order than usual to repair to him at Cork, and explain certain suspicious movements in his country, threatening that if he failed to obey the summons he would at once send all the force he had at his disposal,—and it was then a very large one,—into Carbery and Desmond with orders to burn and destroy everything.

Florence promised to go if Sir George sent him a "protection;" the protection was sent, and duly received, and armed with it the chieftain rode to Cork, attended only with a few of his followers, fearing to excite Carew's suspicions if he went with a larger retinue,

The interview was precisely the same as all those that had preceded it,—angry and vehement charges and reproaches on the part of Carew,—cool and cautious answers, by way of justification, on the part of Florence, many fine words and professions of loyalty but nothing more definite than ever before. But if the interview were the same, its result was wholly different, for the perfidious Carew, baffled and driven to his wit's end, ordered Florence under arrest, and notwithstanding all his protestations and remonstrances, arrested he was. In vain he showed the Queen's pardon for "all former offences" which he had long ago obtained, and had often before availed himself of it with Carew himself; in vain he threatened to appeal to the Queen herself; the President laughed the threat to scorn, saying that he would be answerable for what he did. It was not in the nature of Florence MacCarthy to give way to sudden bursts of passion, and in that case he knew the expression of his feelings would but make matters worse. So he gulped down as best he could the burning words of scorn and indignation that rose to his lips,—repressed, with the strong energy of his character, the stormy emotions that swelled his heart, and with forced calmness submitted to what he could not avoid—hoping, he said, that his imprisonment would be of short duration.

"It may be so," said Carew with a sinister look that did not escape Florence.

"It will not be his fault," he thought, "if I leave

the prison with life. Now may God befriend me, for never needed I more His aid!"

And well he might say so. But the bitterest draught of all was yet to be presented to his lips, and by the hand of Carew!

Ere yet he was conducted from the presence of the harsh and imperious President of Munster, Florence demanded to know the grounds on which he was made a prisoner, in violation of the Queen's written pardon, and Sir George's own "protection."

"The Queen's pardon!" said Carew with a sardonic grin, "hath reference to your *past* misdemeanors, not to your *present*, as you know full well."

"My *present* misdemeanors!" said Florence; "I pray you, Sir George! what are they?"

"Nay, good Master Florence! your show of injured innocence will nought avail you now. Your black treachery is well known to us. For my part I never doubted that you were playing us false; but even your best friends among us are now convinced."

"Where is your proof?" said Florence; "I defy any one to prove aught against me to justify this act."

"Methinks you are over ready with your defiance, *MacCarthy More!*" said Carew, laying a bitter emphasis on the title. "I tell you I have the proof—the damning proof in my keeping—I—even I!"

"I would see it!" said Florence with a sort of hesitation that was unusual with him.

"Nay, nay, good master!" said Carew with a

derisive laugh, "I am too much of a lawyer to produce my documents before the time. But proof I have, and that under your wife's hand, that you are still plotting treason with Spain, of the which the Lady Ellen doth complain as on her own account and that of her children, and prayeth me to take measures that may restrain you in your evil courses which must bring ruin on her family."

Florence heard him calmly to the end; every one of these terrible words had sunk like red-hot iron into his soul, but these fixed themselves there in characters of flame—"Proof I have under your wife's hand!" A deadly paleness overspread his face, his breath came thick and short, and the very blood in his veins seemed liquid fire. One thought kept gnawing at his heart—"Ruin—ruin—ruin to all—and by *her*!—yet I once loved that woman!"

Carew stood watching his victim, enjoying, with a keen delight, the sight of torments he had himself inflicted—torments none the less visible that they had no outward expression.

"I see you are convinced, Master Florence!" said the iron-hearted official with a diabolical leer—"Treason, you see, will out!"

"Like murder!" said the Irish chieftain sternly, with a look that for a moment disconcerted his persecutor, who could not help seeing that not only his recent attempts to murder were known to the alert and astute man before him, but also a passage of his past life (which he had supposed forgotten), when, with

his own hand, he had committed a murder in the streets of Dublin. His confusion was but for a moment, and then he put an end to the scene by opening the door and summoning the guard to convey Florence MacCarthy to prison.

Cautious even then, and still hoping that he might succeed in extricating himself from his perilous position, MacCarthy said no more. Not even a word of comment escaped him, and bowing to the Lord President with the best grace he could, he followed the soldiers who had taken him in charge.

He was lodged in Cork jail, but it was only for a few days; he was sent once more to London, and the same ship that conveyed him to the hated shores of England, brought his cousin, James Fitz Thomas, the Sugaun Earl of Desmond.

Nor one nor the other ever stood on Irish soil again! Desmond died a few years after, a broken-hearted man, in that gloomy Tower that had proved fatal to so many of his race, but Florence MacCarthy was destined to pass full forty years in captivity in London, many of them in the Tower. He might still be called young when this his last captivity commenced; before death came to end his woes he was "the cunning *old* traitor" of the English-Irish officials, against whom he was still, as ever, battling by law for the inheritance of his children. His life, during that long period of time, was the strangest, saddest thing! His wretched wife, whom he had forced himself, for his children's sake, to receive,

had at last deserted him when years passed on and she saw no chance of his being liberated; she left his sons with him, however, and in his poor lodging-house in the blighting shadow of the Tower he educated them; one of them sickened and died, and was buried in that foreign soil far from the graves of his fathers, in that Mucruss where, in evil hour, as Florence now sadly felt, his parents had plighted their faith!\*

By his wonderful knowledge of law, Florence managed to fight all the greedy cormorants who were preying on his lands so successfully that he secured great part of his estates for his children.

But before he died in the Tower, a frail old man broken in body, though never in mind, what changes he had seen! He had heard of the submission of O'Neil at Mellifont; of the death of Hugh O'Donnel in Spain; of the failure of the Spanish expedition under Don Juan d'Aquila; of the flight of the Northern Earls, the extinction of Ireland's last hope; he had seen Elizabeth's haughty head consigned to the tomb, and the wretched imbecile, James of Scotland, reigning in her stead, a sorry successor for a princess who, with all her terrible faults, was a great ruler, and could, at times, be worked upon to do a generous action or a deed of mercy,—not so James, who had neither heart nor mind to wield a sceptre! And the

\* His eldest son afterwards married Lady Sarah McDonald, daughter of Fandal, first Marquis of Artim.

difference was keenly felt by Florence MacCarthy, who had often been befriended by Elizabeth, in any way or another, and had every hope of obtaining deliverance from her, as he had before; but her, tyrant as she was, his last chance died; soon found that nothing was to be hoped for from the mean, cunning, heartless Stuart,—the most worthless of his faithless race, and from him he obtained even the slightest concession or privilege in all the long years of his dismal prison-life.

Darker the stream of that life rolled on, year after year, as he heard of the death of friend after friend, his dearly-loved brother, the gallant Dermot MacCarthy had fallen in the prime of his noble manhood—fallen in fight!—his cousin, Don Dermot MacCarthy, being sent from Spain with letters of encouragement from the King to “the illustrious lord, Countess of Florence MacCarthy, *head of the Irish Catholics in Munster*”—found that Florence was far away in an English prison. And, having himself had the misfortune of falling into the hands of the English, was “hung, drawn and quartered,”—like many another heroic priest in those dark days.

All he loved passed away; the Countess of ClanmacCarthy, the noble mother of an unworthy daughter, died of a broken heart, but her daughter lived on in ignoble contentment, a third of her husband's estates being settled on her by the Government.

Reader, we have placed before you in a hurried

BY MORE, OR,

It by Florence MacCarthy, ended by Elizabeth in one very hope of obtaining his he had before; but with last chance died; for he as to be hoped for from Stuart,—the most faithful from him he never concession or privilege small prison-life.

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and unartistic manner, but still, we hope, truthfully, the "Fortunes of an Irish Chief in the Reign of Elizabeth." Of a man greatly endowed, greatly misrepresented, but who was admitted by his enemies themselves to be "*infinitely adored in Munster!*"

